

MOTOCROSS

ALIVE



FIM WORLD MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW

OASIS IN BULGARIA

ANTONIO CAIROLI
LIFE ON THE ROAD

GAUTIER PAULIN
THE WEIGHT ON HIS SHOULDERS

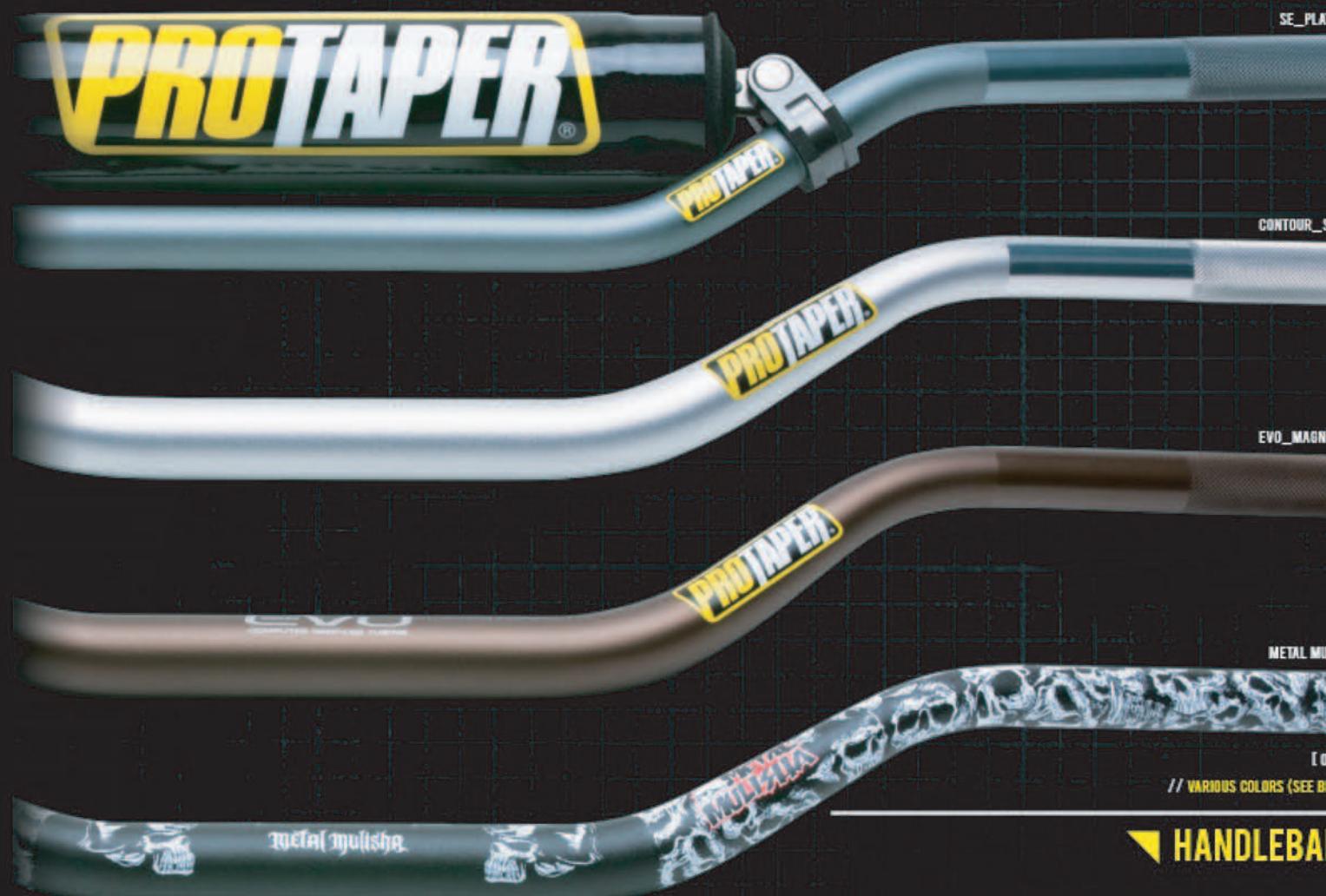
STEVE RAMON
TWO TITLES, TWO STORIES

JOEL ROBERT
GRAND PRIX GODFATHER

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ROUND ONE REVIEW

CLEMENT DESALLE >
TEAM ROCKSTAR ENERGY SUZUKI

PROTAPER



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// BLACK

[02]



EVO
1-1/8" TAPERWALL HANDLEBAR



[03]



// METAL MULISHA

METAL MULISHA
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[04]



PROTAPER
1-1/8" TAPERWALL HANDLEBAR

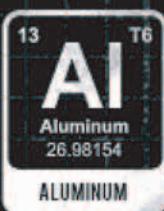
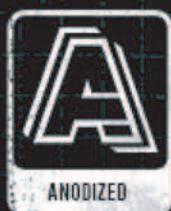


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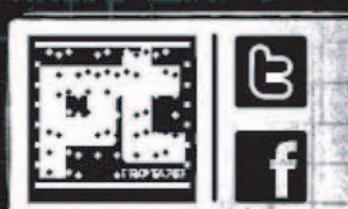
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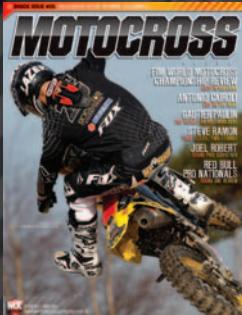
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COVER:
Clement Desalle was the big winner at the Grand Prix of Bulgaria
Photo: Ray Archer

CONTENTS:
MX2 action from the Grand Prix of Bulgaria. Ken Roczen and Tommy Searle head off into battle
Photo: Ray Archer

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GALLERY

#05.1

MARVIN MUSQUIN

Two times World Motocross Champion Marvin Musquin is back on the bike and looking strong as he prepares for the 2011 AMA Motocross Championship. Musquin will be missed in Europe, although his presence in America will continue to give fans World wide enjoyment.

PHOTO BY HOPPENWORLD IMAGE <





MX1 START GALLERY 405.2

MX1 START

Red Bull KTM rider Antonio Cairoli is already a four times World Motocross Champion and heads into this season as the favourite to win number five. Pretty cool stuff for a kid from the small island of Sicily. »





MONSTER CREW

Italian David Philippaerts and Frenchman Gautier Paulin keep their eyes forward and their minds set on the 2011 FIM World Motocross Championships. How they do it I don't know. Those Monster girls could turn heads anywhere.

PHOTO BY MASSIMO ZANZANI



GALLERY

#05-4

BILL NILSSON

Swedish legend Bill Nilsson the first ever World Motocross Champion. Nilsson won in 1957 and added another 500cc Championship in 1960. Nilsson also won 15 Grands Prix in his career. Nilsson is now involved in the sport of Speedway as an engine builder for many of todays stars »





A black and white photograph of Ken Roczen from the back. He is wearing a dark racing suit with 'ROCZEN' in large letters across the shoulders and '194' in large letters on the back. The suit is covered in various sponsor logos, including Red Bull, Fox, Kenny, KTM, and WY. He is standing in a dark, outdoor environment with a cloudy sky in the background.

KEN ROCZEN
TEAM RED BULL/KTM



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SEVEN

Bulgaria is a country that can offer so many different experiences. I love different cultures and when arriving in Bulgaria you straight away feel something special in the air. Old school it is, but the people are very much living in the present

Photo by Geoff Meyer



Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder and it doesn't take a genius to work out that the opening round of the 2011 FIM World Motocross Championship had beautiful and ugly moments. Clement Desalles fighting victory was just pure Motocross at its best. Seemingly slower than Steven Frossard, yet with the heart of a lion the Belgian fought past the Frenchman to win the MX1 overall

Oasis in Bulgaria

FIM WORLD MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP



Words by Geoff Meyer

Kenny Roczen was just in a class of his own and while the easy victory by Roczen was far from fun to watch, his speed and improvement on last year is clear. The German teenager looks fast, sharp and smooth, and on his Bulgarian form it's hard to look at him not winning a bunch of GP's this year. Three Times World 500cc Champion Dave Thorpe mentions in his Motocross Illustrated column this month that he feels Tommy Searle will be happy with second place, considering that Searle hasn't raced much in the last 12 months. Jeffrey Herlings might also feel the same having missed a lot of races at the tail end of 2010.

When arriving in Sofia, Bulgaria for the opening race of World Motocross Championship season it is hard to imagine the oasis that awaits us when we arrive in Sevlievo. The area that circles the Sofia airport is to say the least run down and while I love the culture in Bulgaria you could never expect to find the Gorna Rositza Circuit, which is in many people's opinion the best Motocross facility in the World.

Bulgaria is a place of many famous people. John Atanasoff the inventor of the computer and Roman soldier Spartacus are both born from Bulgaria. Also Orpheus who was part of the quest for the Argonauts is also Bulgarian, before travelling down to Greece to join Jason and Heracles, Orpheus grew up in the streets of Bulgaria. But on April 10 the only famous people we were interested in were our Motocross heroes.

Rockstar Energy Suzuki rider Clement Desalle was more than excited to win and lead the MX1 series points.

"Yes I am happy, but it means nothing for me, I mean it's good, but it is the first GP of the season and it doesn't mean as much. I made a mistake in the first moto, changed my line in the corner and it was different on the double and I made a mistake and landed off the track and I got the track fence in my back wheel. Steven and Jonathan were riding good and fast, in the start of the second moto I made a good holeshot, but those guys were faster and they passed me, but then stuff happened and I got the win. I like the sand and I like every track, I do the best I can in all the races. During the race anything could happen and I didn't give up when Steven was ahead of me. I had some nice races and I did the best I can do. It is difficult if I can say his speed surprised me. I am just thinking about my racing, not the racing of anyone else. I am concentrating on my stuff."

Red Bull Teka KTM Factory rider Ken Roczen is just so confident. For a 16 year old kid he has the aura of a legend.

"Well, it was a good weekend, I won the qualification race and the two motos, but I can't rest on this the competition is strong and I want to go forward from here. I am happy to have the red plate and I want to keep it. The race hasn't been won until the flag is out. When you have a gap you don't focus as much, so I tried to keep it like practice. Last year I won the qualification race by 10 seconds so I knew it would be nice for me here. I was screaming at the back markers to get out of the way. I don't care what the others are doing, but I rode my own race. I think the Supercross racing helped me, in Supercross it's just flat out from the qualification and practice, so that helped, but you have to have good preparation that also helped here. My bike is stronger now, I am good, I know Jeffrey will be strong in Valkenswaard and I am going to give it everything to win that GP also."

As for the fastest man in Sevlievo, it was for sure Frenchman Steven Frossard of the Monster Energy Yamaha team.

"I feel very good on the bike, it's a good bike and I think for both heats it was good for me. Today I took a good start in the first moto and it was easy to win the first moto. In the second moto my start was not good I was 6th and I came back and passed Clement, then I made a mistake and I was in third, and then my condition was good and I came back to second and in the last lap I did a small mistake and I finished second. I want to win so bad I pushed really, really hard and that is maybe why I made some mistakes. I am not surprised about this result. My feeling is very good, I have ridden the 450 before, but I wanted to be World Champion in the MX2 class first, but in my head I knew I had the speed in this class. I think if I take a good start in Valkenswaard and I can follow a good rider, then I can be fast in the start."

Spanish charger Jonathan Barragan came back from a terrible 2010 season, but in Bulgaria he looked in good shape.

"For sure after yesterday my riding wasn't good I was 14th in the race and I was thinking if I can make a podium I would be happy and I am happy. I have a hard year last year with the injury and I want to thank my family and the team, my mechanics, because we worked hard for this. In the first moto it was difficult and I was 10th in the start, which made it tough. I mean 10 riders are so fast on this track and if you have a good start it's easier. In the second moto I was 6th in the start, I passed Clement and then Frossard made a mistake, and I had the lead, but I felt they were faster than me, so I was happy with third in that moto. I don't know how fit I am, but I feel good."

British hope Tommy Searle of the CLS Monster Energy Kawasaki team is going to get better and better. Watch him rock and roll in Glen Helen in a month.

"I am happy with the result, I am happy with 2-2 and I am looking forward to the next round. I am not worried about his (Roczen) speed and I think I can go as fast as him and I am happy with this race. I didn't get good jumps, I wheelieed a little, but I turned tight in the corner and Jeffrey was riding well and I tried to get past so Ken wouldn't get away. I would have liked to have seen his lines, but I should have passed sooner. Obviously it wasn't easy otherwise I would have won, but these tracks are very different to what I raced in America. In America I didn't race much sand, but I have good results, I have always been good in the sand, rode in the sand a lot a couple of weeks ago. With the bike and the suspension guy I ride it great."

Last and for sure not least is Dutchman Jeffrey Herlings. The Red Bull Teka KTM rider is still feeling his way, but he has enough talent to do anything this year.

"My riding wasn't the best, I am a big way off Ken's speed, I will try and work on Tommy's speed, and I will try and fight for second or third in the Championship. I had to do well in Valkenswaard and I won there last year. I will be difficult to race against Ken, he is really fast. In the first moto my gear box was broken and two riders came past me, but it's a mechanical sport and that happens. I was sick all week and I still finished third, so I am happy with this. I need to find two seconds on the track to get Ken and one second to get Tommy. I know Ken is strong in the sand, I haven't been racing Tommy in the sand and I know Ken will be tough, it's going to be difficult."





Oasis in Bulgaria
FIM WORLD MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

Bulgarian history lesson

The state of Bulgaria has 1300 years old history and according to the statistics it is ranked third (after Greece and Italy) for the number of its archaeological monuments. The earliest inhabitants of the present Bulgarian lands were the Thracians. Ancient Greek historian Herodotus describes the Thracians as the second biggest tribe in the Ancient world, after the Indians.

The most famous Thracians were Spartacus and Orpheus.

Spartacus was born on the territory of present-day town of Sandanski (south-western Bulgaria) and as an adolescent was sold into slavery in ancient Rome. Later he became the legendary gladiator that led the biggest slave uprising in the Antiquity. Orpheus is known for his incredible talent as a musician and singer. He was born near the present village of Guella in the Rhodope Mountain a little before the Trojan war. The legend tells that he was the greatest singer of all time and even the wild animals stopped to listen to his music. Also he took part in the quest of the Argonauts together with Jason and Heracles.

The Bulgarians were the basic ethnic component in the structure of the Mediaeval Bulgarian State. Their original home land was in Central Asia, in the mountainous region of Pamir. As a highly developed civilization they had culturally dominated the territories of central Asia for a long time. In the middle of the 7th century Khan Asparuh united the ancient Thracian nation and the Slavic tribes and founded the mighty Bulgarian

Kingdom on the crossroad with Asia and Africa.

Clement Desalle came into 2011 with something to prove and going by his GP of Bulgaria victory it won't be long before he is putting more hurt on his rivals

Photo by Ray Archer

Here are some highlights from Bulgarian plentiful heritage:

1. Bulgaria has a 1322 years of history, since 681 A.D.
2. Bulgaria has harbored and developed culture in 2 alphabets - the Cyrillic (9th century) and the Glagolitic (862), courtesy of Saints Cyril & Methodius (Cyrillic is the basis of most languages spoken in Eastern Europe today).
3. Bulgaria is the first Slavic nations that adopted Christianity.
4. Bulgaria was once one of the 3 biggest empires in Europe among the Frankish, and the Byzantine (it spanned between the Mediterranean, the Black, and the White Seas).
5. Bulgaria preserved its ethnic identity, religion, and culture after 200 years Byzantine and 500 years Turkish yokes!
6. Bulgaria, in its modern history never lost a battle and never lost a flag, captured by its enemies' armies.
7. Bulgaria in its modern history saved the lives of its 50,000-strong Jewish population, despite ill-fated and ill-judged alliance with Nazi Germany!
8. Bulgaria's "Izlel e Delio Haidutin" folk song was sent in deep space on the board of the US Space Probe -Voyager I as part of a collection of our Civilization's finest cultural artifacts - a message to an alien intelligence!
9. Bulgaria gave birth to numerous scientists, artists, and athletes (among whom is John Atanasoff - the inventor of the computer).





Oasis in Bulgaria FIM WORLD MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP



Monster Energy FIM World Motocross Championships Result in Bulgaria

MX1 Race 1 top ten: 1. Steven Frossard (FRA, Yamaha), 38:47.398; 2. Clement Desalle (BEL, Rockstar Energy Suzuki World MX1), +0:08.044; 3. Maximilian Nagl (GER, KTM), +0:19.535; 4. David Philippaerts (ITA, Yamaha), +0:23.876; 5. Davide Guarneri (ITA, Kawasaki), +0:42.423; 6. Jonathan Barragan (ESP, Kawasaki), +0:44.452; 7. Antonio Cairoli (ITA, KTM), +0:48.293; 8. Rui Goncalves (POR, Honda), +0:49.798; 9. Kevin Strijbos (BEL, Suzuki), +0:55.906; 10. Steve Ramon (BEL, Rockstar Energy Suzuki World MX1), +1:04.730.

MX1 Race 2 top ten: 1. Clement Desalle (BEL, Suzuki), 39:21.139; 2. Steven Frossard (FRA, Yamaha), +0:16.222; 3. Jonathan Barragan (ESP, Kawasaki), +0:13.352; 4. Evgeny Bobryshev (RUS, Honda), +0:19.953; 5. Rui Goncalves (POR, Honda), +0:22.354; 6. Maximilian Nagl (GER, KTM), +0:23.603; 7. Kevin Strijbos (BEL, Suzuki), +0:26.653; 8. Xavier Boog (FRA, Kawasaki), +0:30.906; 9. Tanel Leok (EST, TM), +0:33.340; 10. Antonio Cairoli (ITA, KTM), +0:33.861.

MX1 Overall top ten: 1. Clement Desalle (BEL, Suzuki), 47 points; 2. Steven Frossard (FRA, Yamaha), 47 p.; 3. Jonathan Barragan (ESP, Kawasaki), 35 p.; 4. Maximilian Nagl (GER, KTM), 35 p.; 5. Rui Goncalves (POR, Honda), 29 p.; 6. Evgeny Bobryshev (RUS, Honda), 27 p.; 7. Kevin Strijbos (BEL, Suzuki), 26 p.; 8. Davide Guarneri (ITA, Kawasaki), 26 p.; 9. Antonio Cairoli (ITA, KTM), 25 p.; 10. David Philippaerts (ITA, Yamaha), 25 p.

MX2 Race 1 top ten: 1. Ken Roczen (GER, KTM), 39:24.881; 2. Tommy Searle (GBR, Kawasaki), +0:14.667; 3. Gautier Paulin (FRA, Yamaha), +0:19.972; 4. Arnaud Tonus (SUI, Yamaha), +0:21.255; 5. Jeffrey Herlings (NED, KTM), +0:25.587; 6. Jeremy van Horebeek (BEL, KTM), +0:39.301; 7. Zachary Osborne (USA, Yamaha), +1:01.188; 8. Max Anstie (GBR, Kawasaki), +1:07.192; 9. Nicolas Aubin (FRA, KTM), +1:12.012; 10. Harri Kullas (FIN, Yamaha), +1:13.374.

MX2 Race 2 top ten: 1. Ken Roczen (GER, KTM), 39:35.555; 2. Tommy Searle (GBR, Kawasaki), +0:21.468; 3. Jeffrey Herlings (NED, KTM), +0:30.621; 4. Zachary Osborne (USA, Yamaha), +0:35.375; 5. Jeremy van Horebeek (BEL, KTM), +0:38.982; 6. Max Anstie (GBR, Kawasaki), +0:43.344; 7. Gautier Paulin (FRA, Yamaha), +0:55.018; 8. Arnaud Tonus (SUI, Yamaha), +0:58.330; 9. Nicolas Aubin (FRA, KTM), +0:59.768; 10. Christophe Charlier (FRA, Yamaha), +1:41.625.

MX2 Overall top ten: 1. Ken Roczen (GER, KTM), 50 points; 2. Tommy Searle (GBR, Kawasaki), 44 p.; 3. Jeffrey Herlings (NED, KTM), 36 p.; 4. Gautier Paulin (FRA, Yamaha), 34 p.; 5. Zachary Osborne (USA, Yamaha), 32 p.; 6. Jeremy van Horebeek (BEL, KTM), 31 p.; 7. Arnaud Tonus (SUI, Yamaha), 31 p.; 8. Max Anstie (GBR, Kawasaki), 28 p.; 9. Nicolas Aubin (FRA, KTM), 24 p.; 10. Joel Roelants (BEL, KTM), 19 p.

Kenny Roczen is the man in the MX2 class, and it's going to take some serious improvement from his rivals to make his job difficult in 2011
Photo by Ray Archer



MX1 & MX2 HEAD-TO-HEAD

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DAVE THORPE A SEASON BEGINS

Words by Dave Thorpe *by Dave Thorpe*

IT DOESN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO WORK OUT WHO IS THE GREATEST MOTOCROSS RIDER TO EVER COME OUT OF GREAT BRITAIN. WITH THREE WORLD 500CC CHAMPIONSHIPS AND 22 GRAND PRIX VICTORIES, PLUS A LONG LIST OF INTERNATIONAL AND MOTOCROSS OF NATIONS OVERALL WINS, THAT RIDER IS DAVE THORPE

Not only a true legend of the sport, but also one of the really nice guys, as Eric Geboers once told me a real English gentleman. Dave has been kind enough to do a monthly column for Motocross Illustrated and as the 2011 Grand Prix season is beginning we thought we would ask Dave about a season that meant a lot to him, and that began with poor results, but ended in huge celebration and the final of his three World Championships. Here is what he told us when we called him this week.

I remember in 1989 I came into the season and everyone was saying I didn't have it anymore and I wouldn't win again. I worked so hard in the winter to prepare for that season and felt really comfortable with my preparation. I arrived at Valkenswaard and while I didn't expect to win I thought I could make the podium and figured I would be in contention. I went 7-11 and was totally hammered. From memory Jeff Leisk won a moto, and Dirk Geukens also rode really well.

I regrouped, talked to the people around me and went to the next round in France and won the GP. I passed Jacky Vimond to get the victory, which didn't go down well with the French crowd, but it put me back where I wanted to be. We then went to Austria, which was a circuit that I liked a lot and I went 1-1 and gained some points on Eric again.

Around the mid-season point we went to America and I had pulled out of the second moto of the USGP. There was thick dust and I just didn't feel comfortable. I remember Steve Whitelock coming up to me at the end of the day and telling me I had probably blown it (the Championship). I was something like 25 points behind Eric at the time and it probably didn't look that good.

I remember going home and again working really hard in preparation, getting up at six in the morning and running, doing everything I could do be ready for the next Grand Prix in San Marino. We went down there and I woke around 12 midnight on the Saturday night with the wind blowing against the window of the camper. I looked outside and the biggest thunderstorm was come over, I remember smiling because I loved the mud and more importantly I knew Eric didn't like it. It was really slippery and difficult conditions and I went 3-1 (35pts). While I didn't win the GP (Jeff Leisk did), I finished in second and gained a lot of points on Eric (Geboers went 15-3 for just 16 points).

We then went onto England for the Grand Prix of Great Britain and again I knew that Eric didn't like Farleigh Castle, and that really gave me a lot of confidence and motivation. I went 1-1 and he went 9-4. From then on we moved onto Namur and we had a really great fight here, one of those races where you didn't mind finishing second. I went 2-1 for the GP win. Then we travelled down to Luxembourg and I won there before winning again in Switzerland (Thorpe won eight of the last 10 moto and four of the last five GPs).

I had a contract with HRC that just paid for victories, both GP and Championships, so I would get a bigger bonus from Honda for winning GPs or a World title, I did that because it also motivated me to win, and not go for second place. Once you have won one World title you don't want to finish second ever again. Winning was everything for me and not winning a Grand Prix cost me probably 10,000 pounds, which was a lot of money back then.

If I look at the situation with Antonio (Caitrol) and his results in Bulgaria I can understand now that he had an injury problem. He needs to put that behind him now and concentrate on Valkenswaard. He's a good sand rider and hopefully his injury isn't too bad.

What did impress me about the opening round of the Championship in Bulgaria was how Tommy did. He isn't at the speed of Roczen yet, but I think Roczen is probably riding at his best; he has been racing already and came in fast. If you think about Tommy, he isn't at his best yet, he will improve. If I was Tommy I would feel pretty happy about where he is and I am sure he is. ☺





Tony Cairoli

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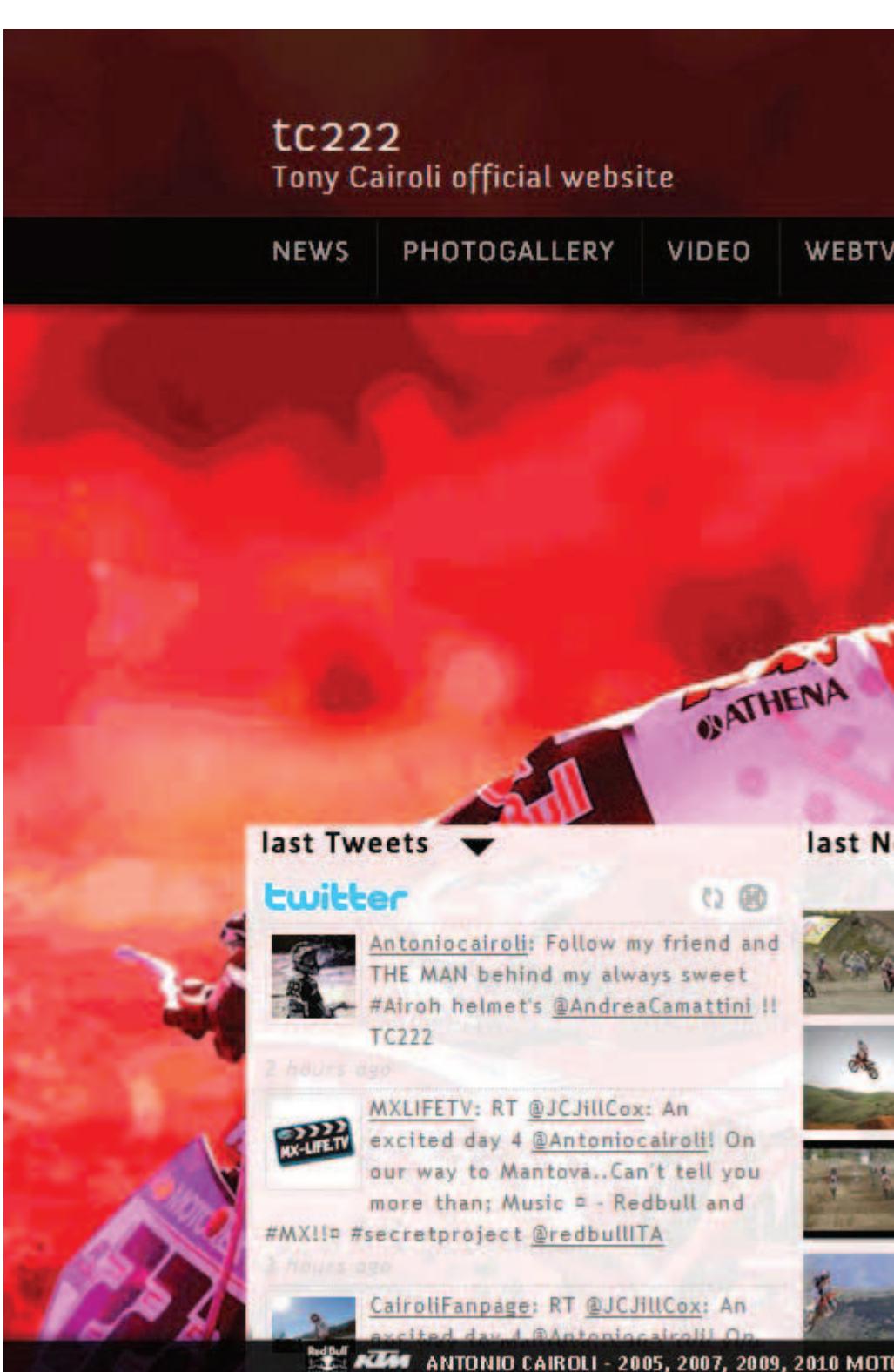
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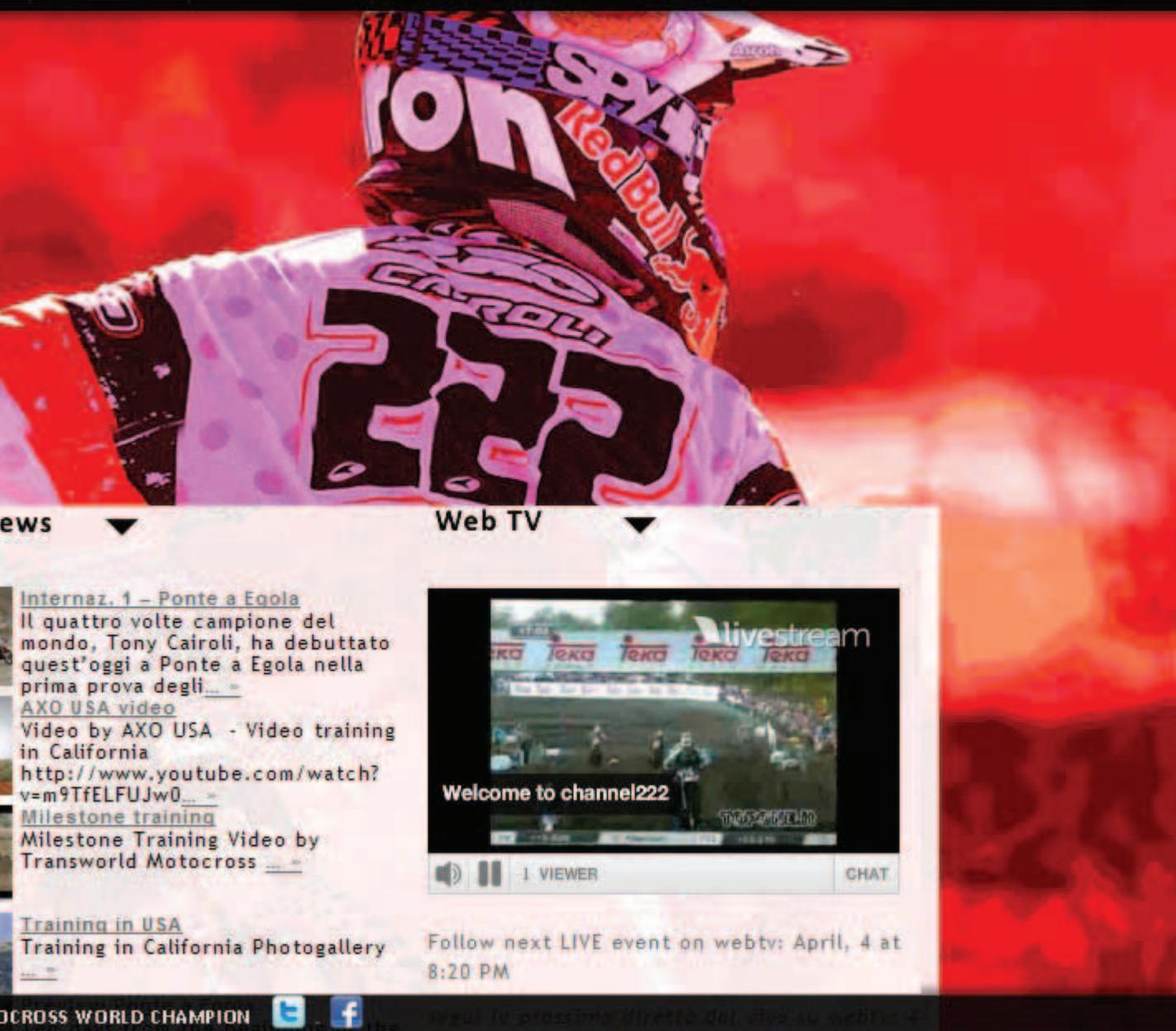
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www.tonycairoli.com

ROCZEN IN BULGARIA

DAVID BULMER

by *David Bulmer*

Words by David Bulmer

Now sure, a lot of people expected Ken Roczen to rock the MX2 class anyway, especially given the way he was riding at the end of the 2010 World Championships and at the Motocross of Nations but I don't think many thought it would be as convincing and dominating as what transpired in Sevlievo.

For those of you who didn't pay the €2.99 to watch the racing, both races pretty much went like this:

1. Roczen holeshot
2. Roczen checks out
3. Roczen wins

There was some battling behind him between Herlings, Searle, Paulin, Osborne and a couple others but as far as challenging Roczen, that was a no-go. Once he got around that first corner safely he was away and would get a comfortable cushion before backing it off and taking the win. He made it look extremely easy.

And this performance certainly made some keyboard warriors eat their words as some were convinced that supercross racing before the season started would be a recipe for disaster, that he'd come in tired from all the travelling or unprepared for the rigours of 35mins plus two laps. Well those theories can be thrown out the window, because if anything supercross has made him an even better rider.

One of the differences that's reported from the American side of the pond between the US motocross and the GP series is that the riders don't go flat out in from the very beginning in the World Championships, they pace themselves, judging when and where to put in their attack. Not so with Roczen, he dropped the hammer from the start, exactly how it is with supercross. He charged as hard as possible in the opening two laps to get his position and secure it from people behind him, then gauged the speed of his opponents and matched it so they didn't close in. And because he was conserving energy from not having to go flat-out all the time, he was still able to go faster, should someone step it up.

Ryan Dungey did it a lot last year, Chad Reed does it and James Stewart occasionally does it when he doesn't crash out. Its supercross 101 and now that Roczen is doing it, the others are going to have a hard time matching it.

But that's not to say they can't beat him and make him work for all 15 rounds of this World Championship, because they most certainly

can. The next round is at Valkenswaard where Jeffrey Herlings automatically moves to the front of the queue due to his amazing sand skills. We can also hope that Tommy Searle works on his starts as both races at Sevlievo he wheeled off the line and lost the race within the first 100 yards. Zach Osborne will also be a threat at most rounds, along with teammate Arnaud Tonon who seems to be a step above last year's level. And then you have the Frenchman Gautier Paulin who is definitely fast enough to win any race, but just can't seem to put it together at every round. That's five guys who are desperate for the title and who are waiting to capitalise on any mistake by the German youngster so he can't afford to rest on his Bulgarian laurels.

Now as for MX1, pick a name out of a hat and you'll have a GP winner. I don't think anyone would have picked out a podium consisting of Clement Desalle, Steven Frossard and Jonathan Barragan. Desalle would have probably featured but for Frossard to almost win his debut MX1 GP would have been a massive achievement and opened everyone's eyes to his speed. Sure, this seems to be one of his favourite tracks, but to lay a marker like that down would certainly have made the top dogs take note.

Speaking of top dogs, Antonio Cairoli was strangely off the pace all weekend. He did hurt his knee in moto one but that doesn't really explain why he 'only' managed 5th in the qualifying race. Perhaps his pre-season trip to California has hindered his progress, the bright lights of the supercross only serving as a distraction, rather than inspiration. Having already won four World motocross title's there has to be some part of him that wants to try his hand in the stadiums around America and test himself against the likes of Stewart, Reed, Villopoto, Canard and Dungey for an entire 17 round supercross series. And he'll want to do that while he's still performing at his highest capabilities, where his chances of success are at their greatest.

It's a shame really as it seems that while the two motocross series' battle it out for supremacy, supercross gets the best of both worlds, plucking fresh riders from either championship and giving them a chance to make it in front of the big crowds, before returning them home for gruelling outdoors.

This season has been a real eye-opener for supercross fans, showing everyone just how exciting it can be when top riders battle it out for 20 laps. Now if only there was some way us Europeans could watch it live...»



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MX1 / MX2 / Vets

Round 2 27 March
Canada Heights, Kent
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 3 17 April
Lyng, Norfolk
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 4 1 May
Milton Park, Northampton
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

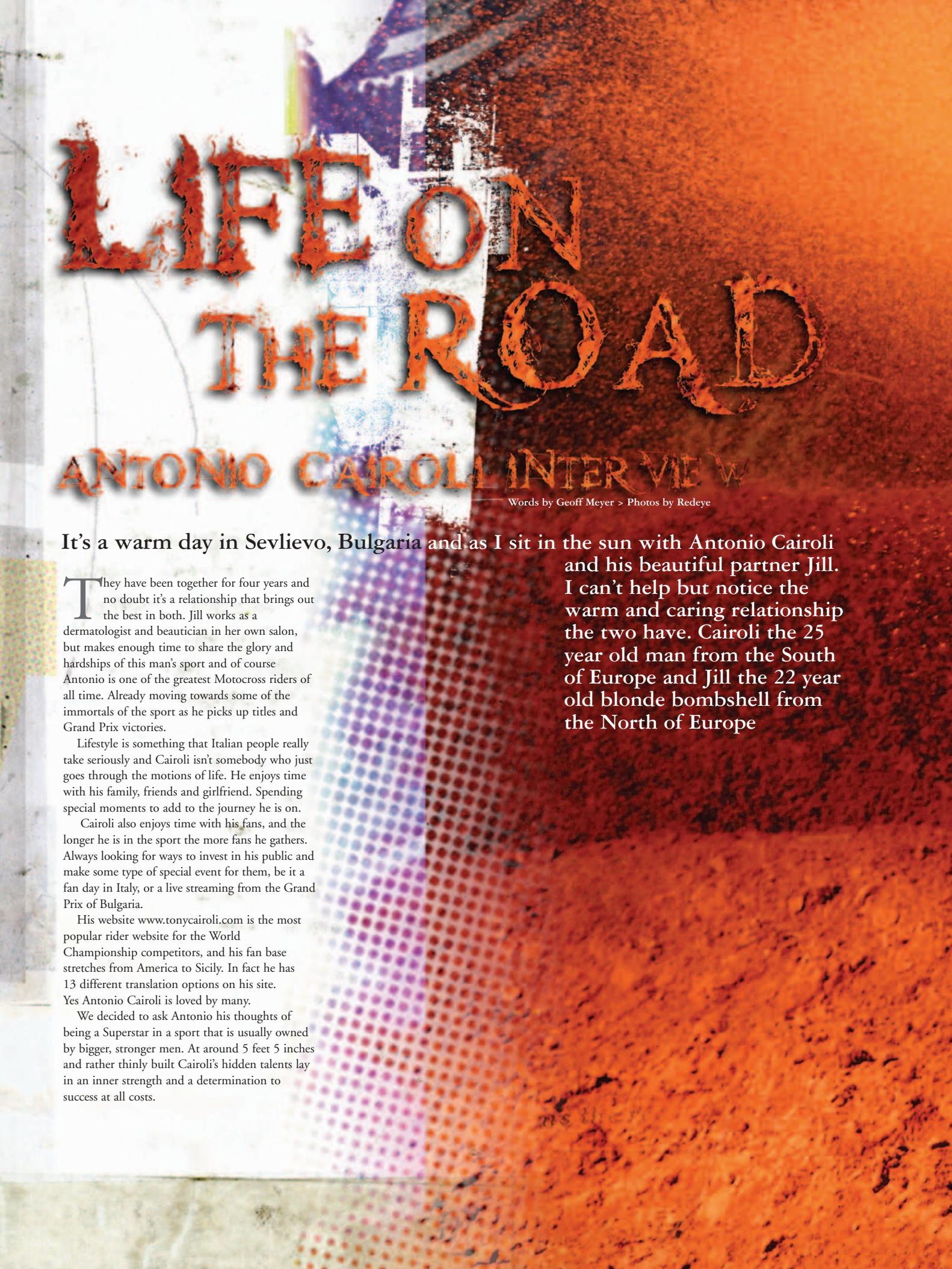
Round 5 26 June
Desertmartin, N. Ireland
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 6 24 July
Foxhill, Swindon
MX1 / MX2 / Vets

Round 7 14 August
Duns, Scotland
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 8 2 October
Hawkstone Park
MX1 / MX2 / Vets

LIFE ON THE ROAD



ANTONIO CAIROLI INTERVIEW

Words by Geoff Meyer > Photos by Redeye

It's a warm day in Sevlievo, Bulgaria and as I sit in the sun with Antonio Cairoli

They have been together for four years and no doubt it's a relationship that brings out the best in both. Jill works as a dermatologist and beautician in her own salon, but makes enough time to share the glory and hardships of this man's sport and of course Antonio is one of the greatest Motocross riders of all time. Already moving towards some of the immortals of the sport as he picks up titles and Grand Prix victories.

Lifestyle is something that Italian people really take seriously and Cairoli isn't somebody who just goes through the motions of life. He enjoys time with his family, friends and girlfriend. Spending special moments to add to the journey he is on.

Cairoli also enjoys time with his fans, and the longer he is in the sport the more fans he gathers. Always looking for ways to invest in his public and make some type of special event for them, be it a fan day in Italy, or a live streaming from the Grand Prix of Bulgaria.

His website www.tonycairoli.com is the most popular rider website for the World Championship competitors, and his fan base stretches from America to Sicily. In fact he has 13 different translation options on his site. Yes Antonio Cairoli is loved by many.

We decided to ask Antonio his thoughts of being a Superstar in a sport that is usually owned by bigger, stronger men. At around 5 feet 5 inches and rather thinly built Cairoli's hidden talents lay in an inner strength and a determination to success at all costs.

and his beautiful partner Jill. I can't help but notice the warm and caring relationship the two have. Cairoli the 25 year old man from the South of Europe and Jill the 22 year old blonde bombshell from the North of Europe







LIFE ON THE ROAD

ANTONIO CAIROLI INTERVIEW

MOTOCROSS ILLUSTRATED: Antonio, you always seem to be busy with your fans, at the races or on your website. What does this bring to you?

CAIROLI: When I was a kid I didn't have contact with my hero's. That is why I want to share this with my fans, because I know what it is like when your hero's ignore you. I always like to make kids happy; I always like to help them out. I remember as a kid nobody was interested in me, it wasn't nice for me. I like to wait and let people make pictures of me, or do fun things with my fans.

MXI: Does having all your fans at the races give you strength?

CAIROLI: I think it's an advantage to have more fans. The closer you get with your fans and the more fans you have the stronger you feel. I also like to share my racing with the fans. I like to know what people think of me and I like to talk to people on twitter or something like that.

MXI: Does it ever take away from your need to concentrate before a Grand Prix?

CAIROLI: No, because I don't care, for me it isn't just important to focus on the race all day long, I can focus for just five minutes, maybe some other riders need three or four hours to focus, but I don't. I like talking with the fans and the press.

MXI: Tell me about the live streaming you did in Bulgaria? I understand you also have some guests on your Friday night show.

CAIROLI: I always thought to have life streaming with the fans, and when I was making my website he website guy Stefano mentioned it is possible to do this thing. I was really pumped, because I would love to have the chance as a kid to talk to their hero. We do it on Friday and on Sunday. Friday is more jokes, inviting guests like Marc De Reuver, and then Sunday we talk about the race.

MXI: It is like being a television presenter or a radio disc-jockey isn't it?

CAIROLI: I would like to be a presenter, I think I can talk in front of the microphone and maybe at the end of the season I make my show bigger. It's something I would really like to do, I love talking to people.

MXI: What about what Stefan Everts does? He was also very good with his fans and the media. Would you like to follow your racing career as a team manager?

CAIROLI: For sure it's a nice job to be team manager, but I don't know if I want to do that. I also like to work undercover and take some kids that are not famous and put them in the Grand Prix. Maybe some 80cc or 85cc riders. Already now I look at the young kids who ride these things. I also have a team for my nephews, they like to ride. I like to help guys who need help, not just be at the races. I see a lot of riders who just turn up to race, but I want to help riders who want to learn and need advice, not the Grand Prix riders, because they already have the skills.

MXI: I have often noticed the relationship you and Jill have is very special. You both seem really happy and also on your facebook you guys are often doing fun stuff. How important is that, to have a partner like Jill?

CAIROLI: For sure we have the same passions, we like the same things. To have fun is important and it's important to work on the relationship, it is one of the most important things. I couldn't have imagined that I would have such a beautiful partner and I also couldn't believe that I would be riding Grand Prix Motocross. Sicily isn't like other countries where you can ride Motocross, in Sicily there are no tracks to ride. We just bought a bike and just ride anything, first two years I just rode to hear the sound of the motor.

MXI: What type of things do you like to do together?

CAIROLI: We like to do stuff, like shopping, or things like this, going out to dinner, or lunch in the city, because Rome is a really beautiful place. I don't like the terrace, I don't like that. Sometimes you can do it, but just sitting and watching people, it seems stupid to me. We need a restaurant that is Italian, we search for that place, not just because of the food, but I also like to find Italian people. Everybody can cook now, but it's not about the food. I like to find Italian people. I love to talk with them and I feel at home. I am travelling so much, be it in America, England or even Holland.

MXI: How would you describe Italian people?

CAIROLI: Italians, they are good and bad people, but Italian people are usually really happy and they like to help other people. Also if you have a problem they will let you sleep in their house, even if you don't know them, if they can help you they will. Also inviting you for dinner, they are really warm people. They are hospitable.

MXI: And the Dutch?

CAIROLI: Dutch people, I like them a lot, they are excited, like for instance in Lierop, they go with a lot of passion and a lot of cheering, they are funny people and they are organized. I was already well organized, but I have learnt from Jill. In Holland they book their holidays a year before they go and they are really too organized sometimes, too many rules, but Jill is also a little bit Italian. She also learnt how to cook really well, that is important for Italian people.

MXI: Any plans for a little Antonio in the near future?

CAIROLI: We have been together for four years. We are not thinking about children yet. I am 25 and Jill is 23. We have time enough to wait for having children; first we want to enjoy each other.



CAIROLI'S OPINION OF THE MX1 AND MX2 CONTENDERS

I think top five guys in the MX1 class at the moment I can put myself, Desalle, Nagl, Frossard, Philippaerts, and also Ramon.

Frossard doesn't surprise me, last year in some races he was really fast. Everybody knows that on hard tracks he is fast, just like all French riders and Bulgaria is a track to suits him. I expect him to have a good championship.

Desalle, it's better for him if he is fitter this year and more focused, if his problem was the fitness last year, then he needs to work on that. He knows that he has to train more, and that is what everyone is doing, learning from the mistakes of the previous year. I think he is young and every year he is learning and for sure he will find a way to be faster and stronger and fitter, we will see. For sure he is only in his second year on a factory bike, so he can be faster for sure this year.

For sure it's a good advantage to be consistent, but you need to be faster than the others and many times last year I was faster than everybody and you need to be constant with your results. Always on the good points to win the Championship.

In the MX2 for sure it's Ken, he is the guy to beat, since Marvin is not there anymore and since he is gone and he was the only one who could battle with Marvin last year, and then he has an advantage. Tommy Searle is coming back from America and I haven't seen him much, but I think Tommy will be fast as will Jeffrey Herlings.

I think Ken is working hard, they are different characters, Ken is really open with friends and people and he maybe has more fans than Jeffrey. He is maybe more popular and more the star. Also because he does American races he probably feels stronger now.

Everyone hopes that Villopoto comes and if more American riders come it will be better for the World Championship and the World Championship riders. I don't think he will have an advantage, it's nice for the people, for the show, for everyone, all of us, and we want to fight with him in the races.

LIFE ON THE ROAD

ANTONIO CAIROLI INTERVIEW

ANTONIO CAIROLI AND HIS WEBSITE

Here is a really cool story from Antonio's website. Riding or driving fast didn't just start with little Antonio.

I'll tell you something ... When I was young my father Benedetto had a Vespa and a Lambretta and was always a challenge to speed through the streets around Patti. No one could beat him and once proposed to compete seriously on the track. But Grandfather Antonio categorically forbade him to run and there was terrible. So he sent me his passion for motorcycles: I am the first son (I have three older sisters, Antonina, Mara and Sara). Four years has put me on a 50 Italjet minicross, and in front of the house pistino we wandered for hours. Seven years after my first race in the regional minicross, with Lem 50. In the second race of minicross my first victory ... The World Motocross, 125 class, I arrived in 2002: three races. For me it was a dream come true, I almost could not believe to be among those samples that followed I was a child. At Genk, the first, I am qualified and my debut race was Loket. That year it was running on one single round. For me, a single point, the twenty-first! In Russia and qualified retired. E' was still a good experience, which was used to understand the difficulties and the level of the world. In 2003 I participated in three Grand Prix (Italy, Belgium and Germany) also with the Team Tiscal Honda Martin Paul but I have never qualified.

At the end of 2003 I arrived in the team of Claudio De Carli, moved to Rome. I immediately set well with the team and the Yamaha 250 four stroke. Monni with Federici and we had a winter training, scheduled by De Carli, very important, partly in Rome and partly on Belgian beaches. Already in the early races of the season, the Italian Championship, I was in excellent condition and I realized that my level and that the bike is really competitive, also bodes well for the world championship

... The rest is history! <<



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The We



GAUTIER PAULIN INTERVIEW

Light on his Shoulders

Words by Geoff Meyer
Photos by Massimo Zanzani and Andrew Ferguson/Monster Energy Europe

If Championships were handed out for good character then the 21 year old Frenchman Gautier Paulin would have a couple. Tall, lean and always with a smile on his face Paulin has really proven to be a popular rider on the FIM World Motocross Championship.

There is something about Paulin that sets him apart from his rivals. He might not be the fastest rider on this year's World MX2 Championships, but there are many saying he will be the smartest. In what was a rather surprise decision by the Michele Rinaldi lead Monster Energy Yamaha team Paulin became the first rider to steer a YZ250F in the FIM MX2-GP World Championship for the Yamaha Monster Energy Motocross Team since 2005.

Back at the tail end of the 2010 season Paulin showed his intelligence as a racer and willingness to improve by building up to a set of results that included four podiums and one victory in the final six events. Most impressive was his Grand Prix victory in the technical sand of Lierop in the Netherlands as he successfully tackled a terrain that had previously been one of his weak points.

Paulin originally joined the Yamaha family after finishing 3rd in the 2009 Grand Prix series and after having earned his first victories in what was just his second full season. It was a season that started with a victory and say him go head to head with fellow Frenchman Marvin Musquin. As the season unfolded so to do his challenge to the number one plate. He did score another victory in Bulgaria. Seven podiums were mixed with bad luck but he still managed to secure third overall and capped the year with a sensational victory on a 450 at the Motocross of Nations.

Likeable and hardworking, Paulin also boasts an eye-pleasing style across the dirt that was born through his schooling on a BMX bike, a discipline in which he excelled as a youngster and became world champion.

The Weight on his Shoulders

Photo: Massimo Zanzani



Motocross Illustrated: Gautier, can you tell me what will make you stronger in 2011 compared to your injury riddled 2010 season?

Paulin: Last year I got injured early, but that is how the sport is sometimes. This year the team has worked really hard on the bike and we all give 110%. Last year I did Supercross in America early on, and then I got injured. When I came back I did some good results and was happy with how I did in some races. People remember my good results I didn't go to America this year, but I am also a bit older and I have more experience and I know more about my body. The team is also confident with me, because they know what my goal is and what the goal is of Monster Energy Yamaha. I am much stronger this year.

MXI: And you are also working with a different trainer now, can you tell me about that?

Paulin: I work with Stephan Nuesser and he is a German trainer who also worked with Josh Coppins. When I was working with Jacky Vimond I was going to the laboratory of Stephan to get tests done. I know him since 2008 and he was with me this winter. I spoke a lot to him about my problems and now it feels good. I like our collaboration.

MXI: Everyone is looking at Ken Roczen and feeling he will win this year's World MX2 Championship. What is your opinion of Roczen?

Paulin: I think it's great to have somebody like Ken Roczen in the sport. Also people like Jeffrey Herlings and me that will make the Championship really good and watch the Grand Prix. He was in America and it's good to see what he did, it's good to see the people are watching him more now and know he does in Europe. Now the people in America are watching Europe and they know the level is higher than before. For sure he was the man at the end of the season and he won everything. His season is going to be long, but that isn't my problem. I am not really looking at Ken, I am looking at what I do, and it is already difficult to do what I do and if I start looking at all the riders, then it really makes my job harder. Ken is a great rider, but I think many, many people will be fast and many people will win a Grand Prix, but for sure he will be fast.

MXI: Do you think there will be surprises in this year's World MX1 Championships?

Paulin: Every season a rider is coming up, I was riding with Marvin (Musquin) for top 15 in the Grand Prix and then the next year (2009) we are fighting for the World title, and we were in private teams, I think there can be many surprises. Look at the American scene, James Stewart was the fastest guy and now Villenpoto is faster than him. Every year is not the same, and I really think it's going to see some surprises, but now if you want to do surprises in MX2 you need a good team and a good bike. We already know that there will be Tommy Searle, Ken Roczen, Jeffrey Herlings, myself and then we will see the rest, but for sure some riders with a good start can keep with us.



MX1: You mentioned the AMA Supercross series; do you follow that a lot?

Paulin: For sure it's a great Championship, with Trey Canard he is young and he wins three Supercross races already and Ryan Dungey without his problem with the bike he was leading the Championship, Chad Reed nobody was thinking about him and he is there the top, and Villopoto is so fit and so fast this year. Then James Stewart who is so fast and doing every time a big mistake, it's incredible and it's a championship like we never saw. For sure I was in front of my computer at 5am in the morning to watch the first Supercross. I really like this Championship and I really like to watch it. I didn't miss being there, I watched all the races on the internet and you can see everything completely. I look at all the 450 races and some 250 races.

MX1: What will make you stronger than your rivals in 2011?

Paulin: This season I don't know what will make me stronger, I feel stronger, but the thing is I don't focus on them, they worked for the World title and I work for being fast and I enjoy it so much more on the bike now. The Yamaha has improved a lot from last year and I am riding now every day. The season is going to be long and my best point is that I had a good winter. For sure I know they are going to be strong and I want to ride the first rounds at my best.

MX1: Do you follow the history of the sport at all?

Paulin: I don't follow the history of the sport; I know for sure Stefan Everts, and McGrath, Carmichael the newer generation. I was always riding BMX and then I was 12 when I got my first motorcycle and 13 when I did my first race, but I didn't really know anything. Nobody in my family does Motocross and nobody is interested in it.

MX1: In the pre-season Stephen Frossard looked really strong on the MX1 bike, does it surprise you that he is so fast against the other MX1 riders?

Paulin: I am not surprised, I was one day (in the winter) riding with him. Yamaha were testing and the manager from Monster Energy Yamaha asked me if I knew a place to ride because he said it was cold and wet in Italy. So I said come to my house, it's good weather here and you can ride at my house. I organized a cool track and they had good weather. It was zero degrees in Italy and 18 degrees where I lived in France. I went to the track on my road cycle to do my program for the day and when I saw Frossard on the 450 the first time I could see he had made a good step. We are both French and the team is really one big family, the atmosphere is really good this year.



GAUTIER PAULIN INTERVIEW

The Weight on his Shoulders

Photo: Andrew Ferguson/Monster Energy Europe

MXI: You have also had good results on the MX1 machine, does watching his results make you excited to move to that class in 2012?

Paulin: For sure I think about riding the MX1 bike in the future. Now I am just 21 and I am not so old. I know and the people around me know what I can do on an MX1 bike, but I have time and I am looking forward to this year on the MX2 bike and we will do our best. Every day I wake up I look forward to riding the 250, I really enjoy it, but next year it will be MX1 and that is another goal and another year.

MXI: Do you have a strategy to beat Roczen and Herlings?

Paulin: I don't think about that, no strategy, my strategy is just to do what I can do. I have a new track at my house and I really like the bike and Monster Energy Yamaha are 100% behind me and I want to give them a victory. I do my best race after race to give good results to my mechanic and family. Ken Roczen isn't the only one who is going fast. I don't need to think about him or anyone else, just myself. Maybe when the season gets to the end I will have to have a strategy, but for now no strategy.

PROFILE

Date of Birth: 26/03/1990

Place of Birth: Draguignan, France

Nationality: French

Residence: Draguignan, France

Height: 183 cm

Weight: 75 kg

Marital Status: Single

Hobbies: BMX, music, shopping, Jet-ski

Career Highlights:

2011: Monster Energy Yamaha, Motocross

MX2 World Championship

2010: 10th MX2-GP World Championship (missed 4 rounds)

2009: 3rd MX2-GP World Championship

2008: 21st MX2-GP World Championship (injured)

2007: 28th MX2-GP World Championship (6 appearances)

MX2 European Champion





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LIVE LIFE GEOFF MEYER

by Geoff Meyer

Words by Geoff Meyer > Photo by Davide Messora

I AM SITTING IN MY GARDEN WHILE TYPING THIS MONTH'S COLUMN. ABOVE ME A BIRD IS TRYING TO BUILD A NEST, JUST 10 METERS ON MY LEFT. TWO BABY RABBITS HAVE COME OUT OF HIDING BEHIND MY FIRE WOOD PILE AND ARE EATING GRASS, AND I CAN HEAR ANOTHER BIRD NESTLED IN THE TREE TO MY RIGHT, SINGING TO ANOTHER BIRD WHO IS FLYING OVER HEAD. THE WEATHER IS PERFECT, COULDNT ASK FOR A BETTER DAY AND I HAVE TO ADMIT, I AM THINKING I HAVE THE PERFECT LIFE

My four kids will arrive home from school in an hour or two and we will sit down in the sun and eat our dinner, probably some fresh fruit and chicken, possibly also a salad. Sounds picture perfect doesn't it, and it should. I created this life through the ideals and imagination I received from my parents and friends.

I don't need to explain to friends, family or people I work with that I am generally a pretty lazy person; I don't really like spending eight hours a day working when there are so many better things to do. Give me a terrace or beach in summer and I am sold. Hand me a beer or a burger and I am your man, but work, no thanks.

I guess that is pretty much why I never achieved anything at school and my spelling, grammar, general knowledge of anything worldly important is terrible. I can't write a clean story if it cost me my life, and I just adlib all the time.

What I did learn from my father at an early age is to do what you love, don't be locked into a job that costs you energy, do something that gives you energy, and once you find that job then don't leave, at least not until the roles are reversed and it is an energy sapper.

Life isn't about waiting for the moment to come, it's about going and getting it, realizing that you can do anything you like, and you don't need to be a workaholic to get there.

I've travelled since I was 17 years old and my goal in life was always to save enough money to get to my next destination. Serious work I didn't find until I had my first child, then I realized I needed to find something that could support my family, just as my father had done before me and his father before him.

I've known many people who have passed away in recent years having spent their whole life stressed and unhappy. They finished work at 65 and suddenly their life was over. That small window of enjoyment we call life has to be lived and not just experienced. No regrets and no sorrow is how we should end our lives, when that does finally happen.

I guess that brings me to Motocross, because it is with Motocross that I have found that dream job, the job where I can travel, work less hours and enjoy life more.

You know it doesn't matter if you are a racer, sponsor, fan, mechanic, team manager, journalist, photographer or girlfriend to a racer, this sport is pretty damn cool. I've been involved in Motocross since I was a little boy of maybe 8 years old, something like 40 years ago. I'm not even sure I am a fan anymore, I mean I love watching a good race, but I like any type of sport if it's exciting, boxing, tennis, cricket, doesn't matter. What I do know is that Motocross is in my blood and the chances of it going away from my life seem pretty slim.

Heading to the United States Grand Prix in May is something I can't wait for. My love/hate relationship with America and American people seems to be more on the love side at the moment. I can't wait to get over to Huntington Beach, or stop in at a Denny's or Outback and have a typical American meal. Booking a hotel with a good bar, possibly a swimming pool and if possible near the beach. Oh, yes, and then there is the USGP itself. I've got a bit of a history with this event as my first ever GP was at the old Carlsbad circuit in California in 1984.

Broc Glover won, the euro's got hammered and Ron Lechien won the support class. The leading GP and AMA riders charging up the Carlsbad hillside is something I still have etched into my memory, wondering how these guys didn't crash, looking so wild and on the edge. My visit to America had nothing to do with Motocross, it was a trip with a friend, we both wanted to experience life more than our other friends and we just happened to find the USGP on the calendar and decided to visit. Before the GP we partied, and after we also partied. Life was good back then, just as it is now. <<

Words by Geoff Meyer > Photo by Davide Messora





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BODYLIFE

STEPHAN NUESSER

by Stephan Nuesser *Abreder*

Words by Stephan Nuesser > Photo by Redeye

SOMETIMES IT'S VERY
INTERESTING TO SEE HOW
MUCH EFFORT RIDERS PUT
INTO THE TUNING OF
THEIR MX BIKES. VARIOUS
BITS AND PIECES ARE
INVESTED TO EITHER MAKE
YOUR BIKE FASTER OR
EVEN IT'S JUST ABOUT THE
LOOK. SOMETIMES I
WONDER HOW MUCH
ENERGY AND EUROS ARE
INVESTED EVERY YEAR IN
PIPES, ENGINE KITS,
SUSPENSION TUNING AND
STICKER SETS

Icertainly if you add up what you spent on tuning activities you come to a 'surprising' amount. Interestingly, most of you agree that the overall performance in Motocross is significantly affected by the performance of the rider and that the rider is in charge of the total 'performance package' by at least 60%.

This is indeed an essential aspect of the MX Sport and shows the unique difference to other motorsport disciplines, where the equipment is much more important.

Now the interesting question is:

When the rider makes up the major part of the performance in the race, why is there so little or nothing invested in your own 'body tuning'? How do you care about your body as you optimize your own, very personal performance? Your MX bike will regularly have to have a service, change oil, change air and oil filters and from time to time also service valves and piston. What kind of service is your body getting?

Your body is your capital to perform on your best personal level. The more you look after your body the more powerful you are and the better your results will be. Also for your body you can see certain kinds of tuning specialists. You can contact sports doctors, physiotherapist, sport scientist etc. to optimize and increase your health and fitness. If you aware of the importance of the body's performance you can work on strategies and activities to 'tune' yourself. But let's come to the end of the theory, I will give you some practical tips on how to work on your 'body tuning'.

Every engine needs fuel and only with good fuel is the engine running with good performance. That's the same for your body. Watch for a varied and balanced diet. Always attempt to use the freshest possible products and try to reduce fast food as much as possible. Especially on race weekends, it's important to ensure the optimal supply of energy by concentrated carbohydrates, especially between the training and between the races. For this sport nutrition products are best suited. You will find a wide range of sport nutrition products in your local sport shop.

For a health check you should be examined by a sports doctor regularly and once or twice a year you should have a blood test. A professional analysation or test of your blood is the only way to determine whether important components such as iron is in sufficient quantities available and are not the reason for a lack of strength or endurance. If for example your bike is running too lean it will deliver only half power. Make sure that once a year you undergo a medical check up to ensure that all systems are functioning at the optimal level. Especially for the optimization of your training a performance test is very beneficial, especially to know your individual training intensities during your endurance training. You should undergo a regularly performance test on a stationary bike or treadmill to check if your performance is in order to achieve your individual goals. A sports medical performance test gives you important tips and information about where you stand in terms of performance, and how your training should be structured for you to get in best possible shape.

If you are at the track riding, you will have a toolbox with you. Just in case something happens to your bike and a quick repair is needed. The same is also required for your body. A first aid kit should include all the necessary equipment for sport injuries which can happen during your training session. To be prepared for sports injuries, and unfortunately they often happen. The following items should be ready: Cool pack, for rapid cooling, is also available as an instant version. Tape material, medication for infectious or diseases such as headaches.

A regular check up and service is always a good idea and surely for your bike you have a shop you trust. You should also have the same for your body. Find a sports doctor and a physiotherapist with sports experience and keep in regular contact with both. Regular appointments throughout the year with a physiotherapist will help you to stay in shape and should be considered not only for acute problems but also as a preparation and care activity program. So in that way you create the best possible foundation just in case of an injury or a problem you can be treated by your 'staff' effectively and quickly. The more information a doctor or therapist has about you, the more effective they can help you and the quicker you will be back on the bike. Although it takes some commitment, the initiative to build up a small, personal medical network is worth the effort.

Stephan Nuesser - sndc.de <<



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STEVE RAMON INTERVIEW

TWO TITLES, TWO STORIES

Words by Geoff Meyer > Photos by Ray Archer

Steve Ramon will always be remembered as being the rider in the right place at the right time. A lucky World Champion many might say, but what many might have forgotten was that the always consistent Ramon came very close to actually winning four World titles in his career.

Included in his 2003 MX2 title and 2007 MX1 title challenges he finished second twice in very closely contested World titles, finishing just four points behind Frenchman Mickael Maschio in the 2002 World MX2 Championship and 14 points behind David Philippaerts in the 2008 World MX1 Championship. Doesn't sound so lucky now does he?

For Ramon 2002 was bookended by two of his five (total) Grand Prix victories. A season that saw two former World 125cc Champion James Dobb (rode a single MX2 GP that year) and Alex Puzar win GPs and a future champion Ben Townley also winning the first Grand Prix of his career.

It was not the strongest of contenders for the 02 Championship, but it was still a World Championship and when the riders arrived in Moscow for the final round of the season there was only 11 points separating Maschio and Ramon.

Ramon would get the GP victory, but the World title would elude him, his first taste of being a contender. Success in 2003 made up for the previous season, but there was nothing to prepare him for the attitude of the Motocross fraternity as they looked at Ramon as an unworthy Champion.

His 2008 loss to Italian Philippaerts was also one that was nearly deserving of a World title. Philippaerts rode a brilliant season and in many people's eyes was a level above everyone else, however what we all forgot was the Suzuki rider in second place, the performance from Ramon was to say the least very impressive.

We decided to sit down with Ramon and ask him about his two title wins and also about his loss in 2002.

Motocross Illustrated: Steve, before we start on your two won Championships tell me about the MX2 Championship you lost in 2002, because that must have been a difficult loss.

Ramon: It was 10 years ago, I went to Russia and I knew it would be difficult. Maschio was riding well that year and it new track. All I could do was go for it and win and see what happens and see what happens with Maschio. I won the race, but still lost the Championship by four points. It was really close. I went there to do my best and try and win the Grand Prix and I didn't have a good start and I just went for it.

MXI: Then you move into 2003 and are pretty much the favorite to win the MX2 Championship and you start well.

How did you feel coming into 2003?

Ramon: At the beginning it was similar to 2002, but I had an extra year experience, the bike was good, the team was good and everything was really strong. It was my year I thought. I made some stupid mistakes in 2003, but similar to the mistakes I was making in 2002, and that is how it goes and you learn from it. I tried to make as many points as possible.

MXI: I remember watching the MX1 class in 2003, those early rounds and thinking Pichon is going to totally smoke both Stefan (Everts) and Joel (Smets). What did you think when Pichon won those first three rounds?

Ramon: I wouldn't say he was going to walk away with it, but he was just really strong. I remember the race in Valkenswaard when he hit Stefan's front wheel when they were battling. For Pichon to race with Everts in Valkenswaard was really a big surprise, nobody expected that.

I think he won both motos. That was impressive. For Pichon to beat Everts in that type of race, it showed how strong Pichon was at that time. But we all know that Pichon was a very good rider, but I don't know what happened to him in that season.

MXI: Then Everts decides he will race the MX2 class for prepare for the MX1 class. What did you think when you heard that? I mean you were suddenly not the guy in the MX2 class anymore, did you worry he could haul in your points lead?

Ramon: It's not something you get excited about knowing that Stefan Everts was coming to the MX2 class. He was the man, well maybe not the man, but he was Stefan Everts. You know Stefan Everts was the top guy and you knew this is going to be difficult now. I also didn't know what the plan was, first maybe he does a couple of MX2 Grand Prix's, or was he focused to just do well in his class and just use the MX2 as a practice.

I didn't have any idea and nobody did.

MXI: And he eventually started for the rest of the season.

Ramon: He was there for every race and of course I had to be riding well if I wanted to win the Championship. If I made too many mistakes and lost too many points then he could catch me in the points. I needed to try and beat him or be right behind him (Ramon finished second to Everts five times in that 2003 season).

MXI: But did you worry he was closing in on you?

Ramon: No, I didn't think he could catch me. I was riding well, and strong and I knew if everything went well I was always on the podium.

I wasn't stressed about that. But what was difficult it wasn't known what he would do, how many races. Some races we had good battles and I was also faster on some occasions, but he still would win the races.

MXI: A DNF in the last round would have handed to title to Everts, how was that last round for you?

Ramon: I knew I also had to keep an eye on Bartolini, I wasn't just watching Stefan. I know the last race I was thinking about it. He was 24 points behind me, so I needed to finish, because he was winning all the races but one once he came into the MX2 class. I didn't think about going for the win or the podium, I just had enough.

MXI: In 20 years time the record books will say that Steve Ramon beat Stefan Everts in the 2003 World MX2 Championship. Nobody can take that away, do you think about that much, that you beat the greatest GP rider of all time?

Ramon: No, I don't think about that. Maybe I beat Stefan Everts, but people will always say he missed three races, people will always say that, but I am not thinking about that. It bothered me at first, when you are the champion and you hear people saying things, then it bothered me, but I have the Championships and my name is in the books and that what counts for me. I mean I missed two Championships, the one in 2002, missed winning by just two points and then again in 2008 I lost to Philippaerts by 14 points. It's close to going for four World titles. Ok, I was lucky, but I was maybe unlucky to win four World titles.



STEVE RAMON INTERVIEW





STEVE RAMON INTERVIEW

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MXI: Then in 2004 you moved to the MX1 class, how was the move to the premier class?

Ramon: I have to say it all started really good, the first Grand Prix was in Zolder and I won the first moto, so for me it came easily. It was a new bike, and new names, the big class, all the top guys. I can't remember if I thought I was better than I thought I was, I know there wasn't any pressure from the team. The pressure usually comes later in the season.

MXI: Then you get another World title in strange circumstances. Nobody wants a rival to get injured, but there must have been a part of you thinking, wow, I am now the top guy in the MX1 class. Tell me about 2007, how did you feel when you heard Josh got injured?

Ramon: He (Josh) was riding strong, but the season is long and it is never finished until the last Grand Prix. You know, of course I didn't think it was good, I didn't want Josh to get hurt, and actually at that moment I was working hard and trying to do my Grand Prix's as well as possible. Some people said he was out for a short period, or maybe three months. I just thought to myself I will see how he comes back and when. I was also injured and it wasn't an easy time for me. I can't remember the gap now, but normally in a Grand Prix I would try and get as many points as possible while he was out injured. I needed to close the gap, but I crashed and hurt myself and I couldn't train and it was really difficult.

MXI: Did you have any idea who Josh was, did you check him out much when he was preparing for the British Grand Prix?

Ramon: I didn't keep an eye on him at all. Of course when it was free practice you can see if somebody is going full gas or not. At that time I had my own problems, and I was just busy with myself and trying to be the best I could do. I mean I figured if he couldn't finish the Grand Prix in England, then he wasn't going to be able to race in Lierop. I knew it was over and I was happy to go to Lierop with the red plate, but I also had a lot of problems, a lot of pain at that time. So I had to work hard and prepare myself for Lierop. I was not champion yet going into Lierop.

MXI: Which title meant the most to you?

Ramon: That is a good question. I mean MX1 was the premier class, but the MX2 was my first title. I think maybe the MX1 was the best for me, yes it was MX1.

MXI: Can you win another World title?

Ramon: If I am fit I can win again, if I am in good shape I can win another Championship. Of course some riders have injuries and they are out for some years, but guys who are not often injured, guys like myself, I am always there, but I always have small injuries. It's hard on the body. Each year I have so many small injuries, it isn't good to get hurt and be out for a long time, but it's also good for the body to recover. My body has only been 100% in the winter. My body isn't very often 100%, for sure not in the season. There have been races that I have been 100%, but usually a rider has something wrong. Sometimes you have to run instead of going cycling or some other change in your fitness plan. I think I am good for another two or three years to race at this level.

MXI: How difficult is it to stay fit, how often is a rider 100% fit in the season?

Ramon: I was riding last year maybe two or three times during the week in the season. Mentally it makes it also tough, I had times when I was like, man, this sucks. In Germany I had so much pain, I thought about quitting for a few weeks. The title was gone, but I wanted to finish as high in the standings as possible. So many good riders and only Cairoli was consistent.

MXI: Obviously you need to remain at the top, or inside the top five in the World, otherwise getting a ride in 2012 won't be that easy. What is your opinion on that?

Ramon: Of course it isn't easy getting a good ride and being in a factory team, and also I am not the youngest anymore. There are many good young riders coming up. The team knew the problems I had during the season and they knew I was doing my best and I wasn't the normal Steve Ramon. I wasn't too worried, more the people around me.

MXI: What will happen in the MX1 class in 2011? Who are your tips?

Ramon: Clement he is riding very well. He looks strong, I expect a lot from him. He looks confident and he looks fit. In the pre-season races he looks good. Also he looked fitter. It's a long season and we need to look and see how he is going. I haven't raced against Cairoli and Philippaerts, but it's not that important how the pre-season races go. If you win motos or are on the podium that is good enough. Also Frossard is riding really well. He is a fighter and that is good. I think the rest will be similar. Townley I don't know, it's difficult to say, at the MXoN he rode well, but he crashes so often and gets injured. He has some weak points, but you never know, it can get better and he is due some luck. To go for the title I don't know about Townley.

MXI: And MX2?

Ramon: MX2, there is going to be some good racing with Roczen, Herlings, Paulin. We have to expect Roczen, but we need to see how he does on the KTM outdoors. Paulin was fast last year when he came back, it is important to stay healthy; it's the most important thing if you want to win the Championship. It's difficult to train if you are not 100% fit. <<



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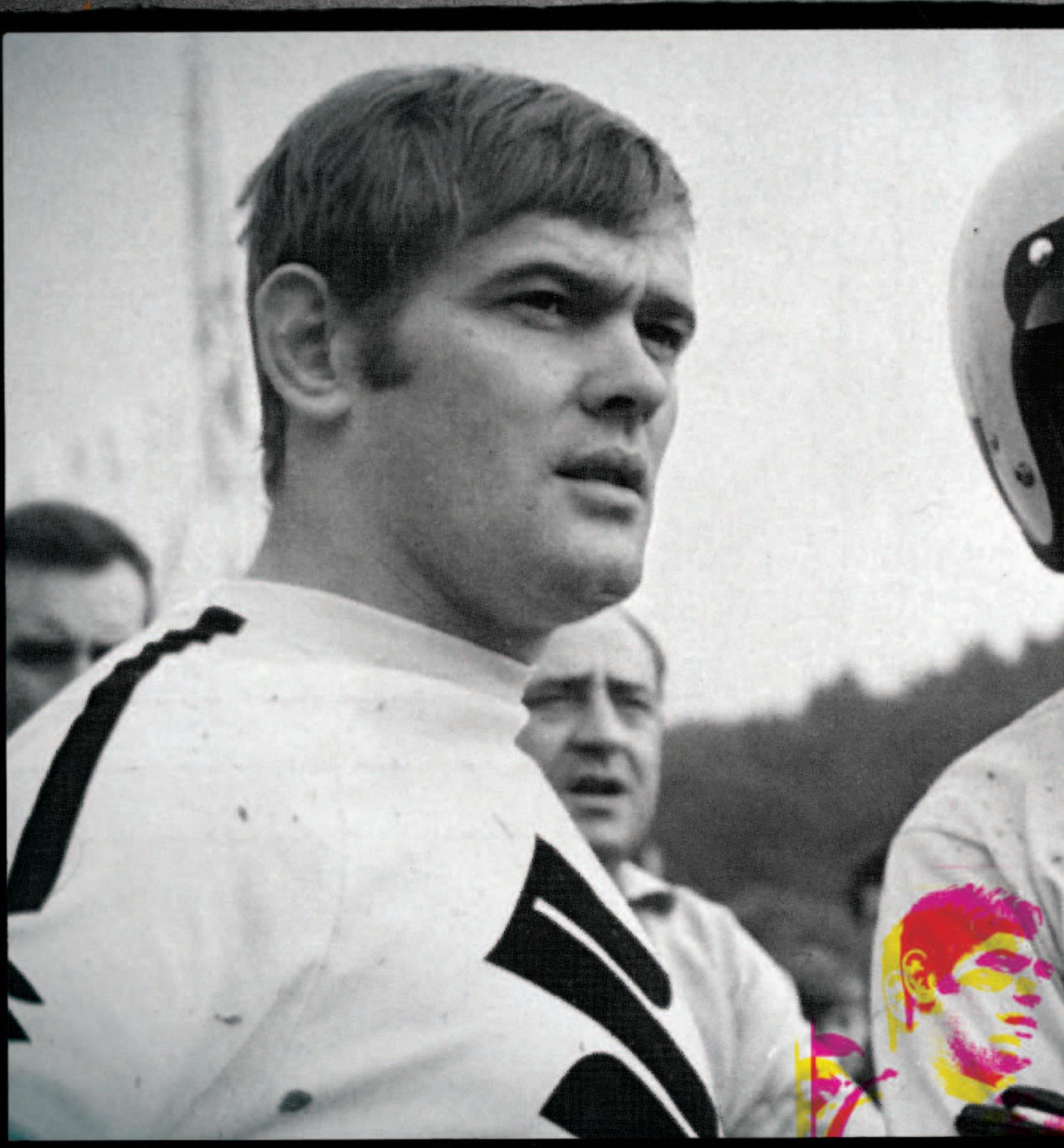


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Joel talking with Roger De Coster



JOEL ROBERT GRAND PRIX GODFATHER

Words and photos Geoff Meyer

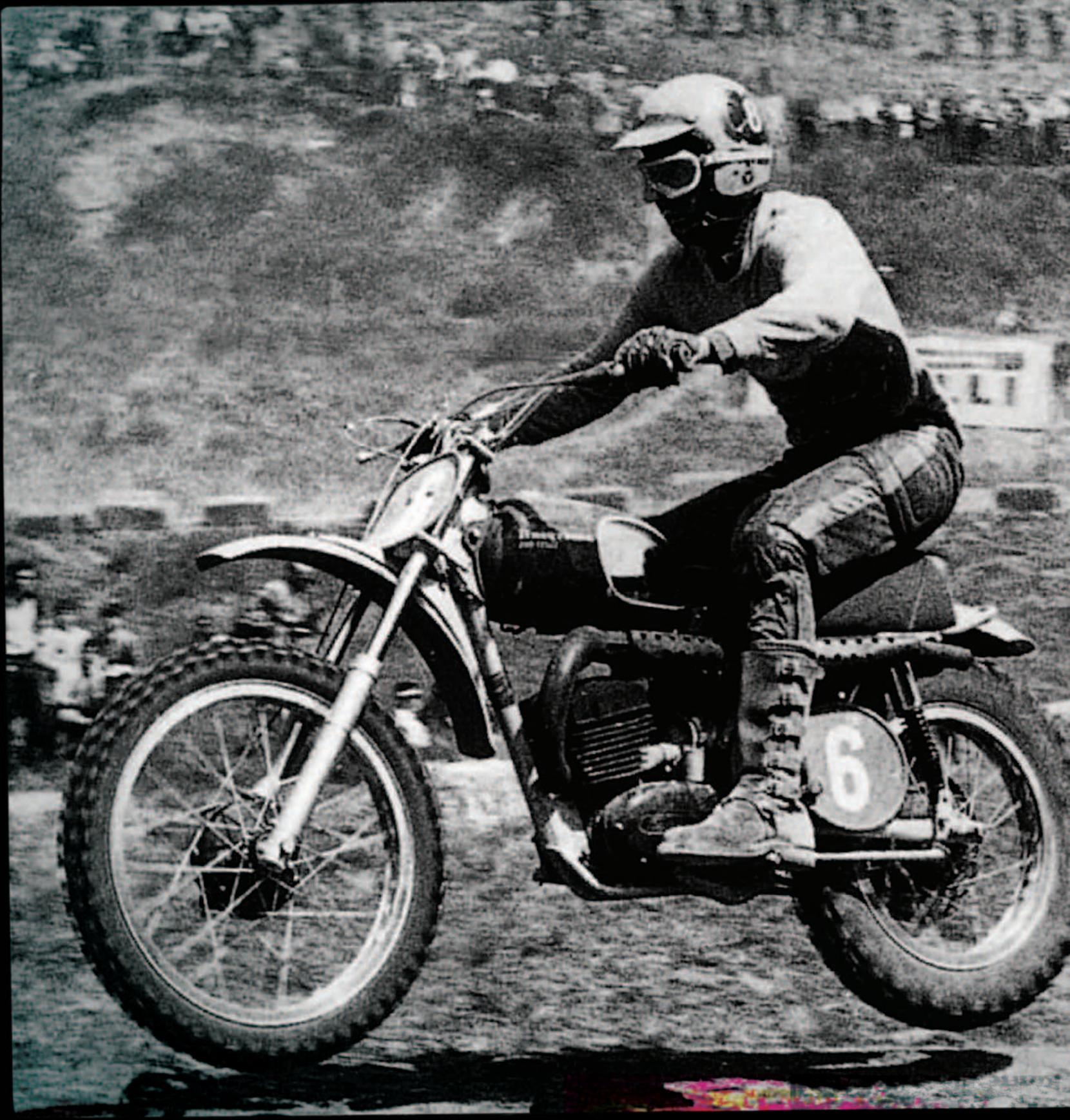
He may have grown older and lost his place at the top of the all time greatest winners list. He might not even be as visible at the races as he used to be, but make no mistake, Joel Robert remains one of the most important figures in Grand Prix motocross history

Back in 2001 Stefan Everts surpassed Robert's magnificent record of 50 GP victories. A year later Everts picked up his seventh world title, although Robert is still the Godfather of GP motocross, his name belongs at the very top of the list, and not even Stefan Everts can take that away from him.

Robert's tale is one of a man who walked the walk and talked the talk. He did what he wanted and was not forced to do anything other than what he felt was right for him. One of the strongest men to ever manhandle a dirt bike Robert was gifted. He was without doubt as naturally talented as anyone before or after him. These days Robert, a modest man, prefers to applaud the work ethics of today riders rather than speak at length about his own immense talent.

At 62, Joel Robert is, and always will be, one of the sport's important figures. Not only is he one of the most successful riders in GP history, but he also played a major part in the European invasion of America back in the late '60s - an era which changed the way American motocross was seen worldwide.

In the '70s, Robert's popularity was such that Sidi made a replica boot from the design he'd been wearing, which doesn't sound too special, until you realize that in those days that type of promotional genius was unheard of. Robert entered the fray at a time when four-time world motocross champ Torsten Hallman was at his peak.



Joel chasing Torsten Hallman



JOEL ROBERT GRAND PRIX GODFATHER

The handsome Swede had already won two of his four titles, yet, despite having the might of Husqvarna behind him, he was no match for the steely-eyed Belgian in 1964. Like most Belgians in that era, there was no junior racing (due to a ridiculous Belgian rule that didn't enable boys to race until they reached 16) so it was straight in at the deep end.

'Because we couldn't race in Belgium before we turned 16 I started as soon as possible, back in 1959. I had a Zundapp machine, it was a street bike, but we converted it into a motocross bike. I won the Belgium junior championship in my first year and then bought a Greeves machine, which was the best 250 at the time - I was 17 when I got it.'

'I started doing Belgian internationals and a couple of years later some GPs; it was in 1962 that I began my grand prix career. I did five or six rounds and my best results was a sixth in Sweden. The following year I had the Greeves again and my best result was fifth place, many people thought I could be a future champion.'

Money problems in the Robert family almost cut Joel's career short before it had even started. But, fortunately, Torsten Hallman turned down a deal to race with CZ, preferring to stay with Husqvarna, considered by many as the best machine at that time.

After Hallman's refusal Robert was approached by CZ and asked to visit the factory in Strakonice, Czech Republic. After some small talk he signed for the CZ factory and moved towards making his own legacy in motocross.

'At the end of 1963 my father had no money for a new bike, so the CZ importer in Belgium offered me a bike for the '64' season. I won the first two races in Belgium, beating Torsten Hallman, who was the world champion. In the first GP in Spain I finished sixth or seventh I think. Then on the 26th of April 1964 I won my first ever GP. Then, at the next GP, I won again. I won four in a row and came second in Luxembourg, then third in Italy, before winning four in a row again. I was my first full season of GP racing.'

Of course, Robert didn't have it all his own way, he had to fight for victories, and, with his approach to training bordering on the ridiculous, he knew he had to race a lot to keep in shape. But then he loved racing. Winning was everything. Had Robert trained a little harder who knows how many championships he could have won? His loses in 1965; '66' and '67'came at a time when he thought it more important to celebrate his 1964 victory than work hard to keep the title.

'I remember that sometimes it was easy for me when I was racing. I liked the rain and the mud, sometimes when we rode a muddy track I would be one minute in front of second place. I didn't know I could win so easy, and that was a problem in the years after: I thought I could do it without working for it. I went into the next three years thinking I would do it easily, so I didn't really prepare. I was not a hard trainer, and I lost in '65, '66 and '67. I finished second in all those three years, twice to Hallman. Then I won five times in a row.'

'At that time I enjoyed life. I remember one race in East Germany, or somewhere like that. I was walking around at 3am on the morning of a race very drunk. They filled me up with coffee at about 6am and I went out and won the race. I was just having fun back then, but not a Grand Prix, then it was back to work.'

Travelling to America was always something that interested Robert and one person that helped him make the journey across the Atlantic was US Husqvarna dealer Edison Dye. The American businessman loved motocross and could see that many European riders were a level above their American counterparts.



Joel passing Sylvian Geboers



JOEL ROBERT GRAND PRIX GODFATHER

Dye came to Europe during the 1967 season, recruiting riders to travel to America at the end of the year to ride for a fee. Of course, he was still interested in displaying the superiority of the Husqvarna brand, but Dye also pursued deals with Roger DeCoster, Joel Robert and Dave Bickers, all world-class pilots for Husqvarna's archrival, CZ. DeCoster recalls that they earned \$240 per race. It seems a miserly offer, but in the late '60s it was enough to ensure the best European riders went aboard.

'I decided when I was a little kid that I would someday go to America,' DeCoster reflects, 'so the chance to go to the United States to race for money when the GP season was over was a tremendous opportunity.' Robert remembers those days in America with fondness, finding time to relax and enjoy time on the road with his fellow countrymen, plus a few other European-based riders, was good fun.

'I did the Trans-AMA in America for four or five years. We went with CZ in 1967, we bought a secondhand van and went travelling all around the States, and it was a lot of fun back then. We really controlled the racing and it wasn't until we came across a rider called Bob Hannah that we started losing.'

It was the moments between the races that Robert really enjoyed the relationships with riders, mechanics and girls. While he was making a living from motocross he was always the first to enjoy a night of beer, girls and fun.

'We could travel together, we could do three or four GPs in a month and in that time not go home. After each race we would have been good in this era. I had a bad character, if somebody told me to do something, I would not listen. I would do what I wanted, and that sometimes meant having a good time on Friday or Saturday night. Now you have to do what you are told.'

RIVALS SPEAK:

TORSTEN HALLMAN: Joel and I had been big rivals on the track, but at the same time we had a lot of fun together and we were very good friends. When nobody was around and it was just him and me he was a great person and that is the Joel I always like to remember. He has also gotten older and much calmer now."

SYLVIAN GEBOERS: He was a Belgian hero, a world champion; we all looked up to him. He was very strong and very talented, but physically not trained he was somebody who enjoyed life, that was for sure of course after some races or championships we celebrated, but during a GP, he didn't drink too much. He was the most talented rider I have ever seen, it's wrong to compare riders from different eras, but he was the star from that time.

HARRY EVERTS: 'He made me famous. He gave me the bike. In 1972 I was in one of his riding schools in Austria, he liked what he saw and phoned my father. He told my father: "We send Harry to America." Within no time I was on my way to the US. He gave me my first start in motocross. Harry also let us in on a little secret about Joel Robert: he, amazingly, never broke a bone in his 14-year GP career. I was in Brazil in 1999, sitting in a restaurant with Joel Smets, I told him that and he said "No way," he didn't believe me. We turned around and Robert was sitting there, so Smets asked him - it was true; he never broke a bone in his career. <<

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The sibilance and the woolly r's were as distinctive as you could find, and, as always, the conversation centered around racing. "It wath a wewelathion, and abtholute wewelathion!", he enthused. The revelation was, of course, racing related, since nothing else matters. He had just attended the first day of the Coupe De l'Avenir in Belgium, in those days still within eye - and earshot of the prison of Jamioulx. The roughness and narrowness of the track as it snaked itself through the forest, was a revelation to him. Here was the real deal, nothing like the near highway-like tracks that riders were riding on back home in South Africa. It was no wonder that the Euro riders were more prepared for motocross at top level compared to the young South Africans on tour.

One rider, later to become a top level GP star, caught his eye. He was into - and out of the corners much faster than the opposition, and lap by lap, stamped his authority onto proceedings. The post-mortem session unfolded around a barbecue fire with a good few local Belgian brews standing to attention, waiting to make their contribution to the evening's success.

"Thereth five horhpower right there. Right there!" Rod was opening and closing the index- and middle fingers of his right hand in a blur. He was a legendary road racer, in an era when the weapon of choice was a Yamaha XS1100, a bike that combined the agility of a submarine and the handling prowess of a shopping trolley with the weight of a small suburban office block. A delightful combination. Rod was known as a demon braker, and at one memorable event regularly out-braked a star-studded field, including a multiple 500cc road race world champion. To see him storm into a corner at full whack, throttles (four cylinders, remember) wide open way beyond the point where any sane person would have lowered the anchors already, was thrilling and terrifying in equal measure. He was the braking king in his day.

Road-racing and motocross are not exactly the same, but there are some general rules applicable to both, and the sage was pointing them out. He was making the point that proper braking- and throttle technique were worth as much to a good lap time as any number of modifications, and moreover the right hand modifications would be immeasurably lighter on the pocket where your finances are kept.

Braking is one part of the equation. The other part is the function that most racers believe us humans were endowed with a right hand for in the first place - giving gas. The phrase is so endemic to racing that it is a prime candidate for the phrase of choice if one had to describe racing in a couple of words. It is the same in every language. Instead the cheering "hip, hip, hooray!", the Germans would go for "gibt Gas, gibt Gas, gibt Vollgas!" a phrase that is not all that difficult to translate, especially since it more often than not hits the airwaves only once the sampling of liquid refreshments is well underway.

As is often the case with real expert opinions, once Rod threw his log in the fire it seemed dead obvious. Nothing of this was new or revolutionary, yet it was shocking to realize how many rider/father combinations overlooked these basics. Almost invariably, they seek their salvation in the tuning catalogs. "If only we could fit this new Supafahf pipe, the double overhead thingamigigs and the ultra-light bugalugs, we'd be right up there." Not necessarily true. There is no denying the fact that at a certain stage of a rider's development curve he'd start to derive benefit from tuning mods, but most riders struggle to fully exploit the full bucket power underneath them in the first place, and in many instances the tuning mods would make the power peakier or move it somewhere in the rev range where the rider is never likely to look.

Much like a super graphite tennis racket with space-age catgut strings by itself could not by itself turn Peter Potaoman into a Federer, a fully tricked-out, super-suspended, 50 horsepower bike can not turn Willy Weekendwarrior into a Cairoli or a Carmichael. Those mods have their role, but only once the basics have been mastered. We have seen numerous real life examples of this theory. Once circumstances dictated that Shannon Terreblanche had to line up for a GP on a 60 hour old, standard KTM with not so much as an exhaust pipe mod. He rode to his best GP result up to that stage, well into the points.

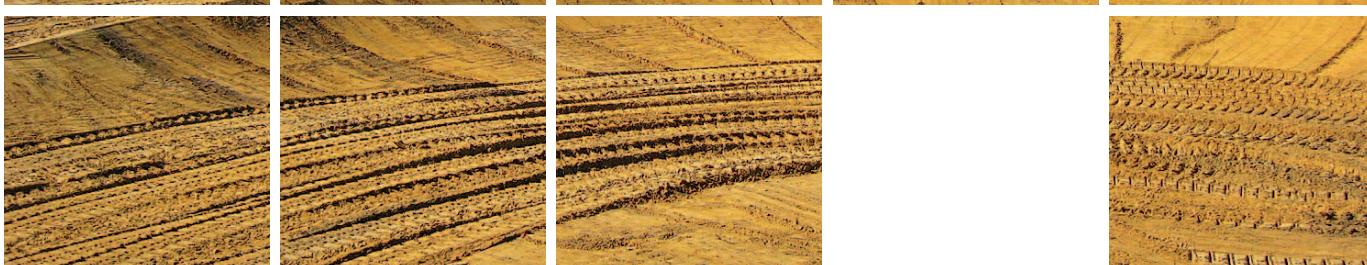
Avo Leok won his last GP on a 450cc bike that was just about only a sticker set different from the bike that you could collect from your friendly dealer. You see, the theory also works in the upper echelons of racing (or maybe especially there). "Five horhpower, bud" (in the braking fingers). "And five horhpower more" (in the throttle hand). These invaluable tuning tips will cost you a total of ... nothing, except the training hours to put it in practice. 



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ALEX GOBERT

Words by Alex Gobert

It's a credit to the Australian motorcycle industry as well as the promoters over here that our domestic titles have risen to gain notoriety across the planet, no doubt aided by the revolution of the World Wide Web in recent years. When rumours started to spread in late 2009 that Scotsman Billy Mackenzie was interested in making a move to Australia in a bid to rejuvenate his career, it's easy to say it caught us locals' attention.

Once confirmed by Kawasaki, the team managed by multiple-time national champion Troy Carroll, it was quickly realised the coup that the Queensland-based team had scored. One year on from that point and BillyMac had earned himself the number two plate behind defending three-time champion Jay Marmont, as well as a string of impressive Super X performances to round out 2010 despite returning from injury late in the season. When I first ever interviewed Billy he told me he was in Australia to have some fun, learn Supercross and hopefully prepare for a trip to the United States AMA series within a few years.

Mackenzie's form last year was exceptional, even if a little unsettled as he based himself out of a camper in the laid back beachside town of Byron Bay for much of the year, and you could argue that the only reason he didn't win the title was through bad luck and a niggling wrist injury that he picked up early in the year. That same bad luck followed Billy to the U.S. in September at Steel City when he broke his collarbone while deputising for Aussie Chad Reed during the final rounds of the AMA Motocross nationals. Mackenzie knew that it would be a hard task to suit up in place of Reed, who was the defending champion at the time, since after the Australian title wrapped over a month earlier he had barely touched a bike in preparation for the 11th hour guest role. With his first chance to impress in America dashed, Mackenzie finds himself back in Australia for another season this year with the team picking up additional backing from Monster Energy, and he seems to be more than content with that.

Not only is Mackenzie finding comfort with the team, but he's also established himself a base in Australia, and says that's another massive step forward in his program as it's finally starting to feel like a home away from home for him. One year after Mackenzie's relocation to Australia we've seen grand prix veteran and former world championship runner-up Josh Coppins also sign up to tour our nationals with the powerhouse CDR Rockstar Energy Yamaha team.

Unlike Mackenzie, who isn't ruling out a return in due time to either Europe or America, for Coppins this year is the first step toward retirement in what has been a decorated career. Don't be fooled and think that he's here simply to earn money though, because at 34 years of age he has plenty of fight left in him, and he brings a lot of recognition to both the Aussie and New Zealand domestic titles. So far in 2011 we've seen BillyMac win the Broadford mud-fest that opened the season while Coppins was a disappointing ninth, but since then it's been all Coppins as he's won both the Appin and Raymond Terrace rounds. Those results have Josh maintaining a nine-point lead in the series after three of nine rounds, with 20-year-old local rising star Dean Ferris – yep, the kid who rode for Honda in select GPs last year – currently a consistent second as he's signed to join Mackenzie at Kawasaki. Marmont sits third after a frustrating ninth at round one and he too is building momentum, while a dislocated rib that Mackenzie suffered at Appin has caused him to drop to sixth in the series – 41 points in arrears of his former GP rival. With four-moto formats consisting of two back-to-back 20-minute motos run to start with and then another set held later in the day, even the experienced GP campaigners have some adjusting to do in the MX Nationals, and do so in impressive fashion.

The story's only just unfolding with only 12 motos run of a scheduled 36 this season, and it's quickly becoming an intriguing affair where consistency is very much the key. Only time will tell whether the GP juggernauts have what it takes to deny the savvy and ever-determined Marmont of a fourth-straight title, making this year one of the best on record.

OUTBACK MOTOCROSS

by Alex Gobert

THE AUSTRALIAN MOTOCROSS CIRCUIT IS BECOMING ONE OF THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL SERIES IN THE WORLD, WHERE MANY OF THE FASTEST RIDERS ON THE PLANET ARE COMING TO EARN THEIR STRIPES – AND PAY CHEQUES – ON AUSSIE SOIL.





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GALLERY

MX2 START

Two teenagers leading the World. German sensation Ken Roczen and Dutch flyer Jeffrey Herlings lead the pack into turn one of the 2011 FIM World Motocross Championship in Sevlievo, Bulgaria. Be sure that both riders will tell in future GP and World Championship victories

PHOTO BY RAY ARCHER

#055

GALLERY #05.6

STEVEN FROSSARD

Monster Energy Yamaha rider Steven Frossard was the surprise of the Grand Prix of Bulgaria. The Frenchman had shown speed in the pre-season, but nobody could have imagined he would have performed under the pressure of GP Motocross with his stunning 1-2 results and second overall

PHOTO BY MASSIMO ZANZANI IMAGE







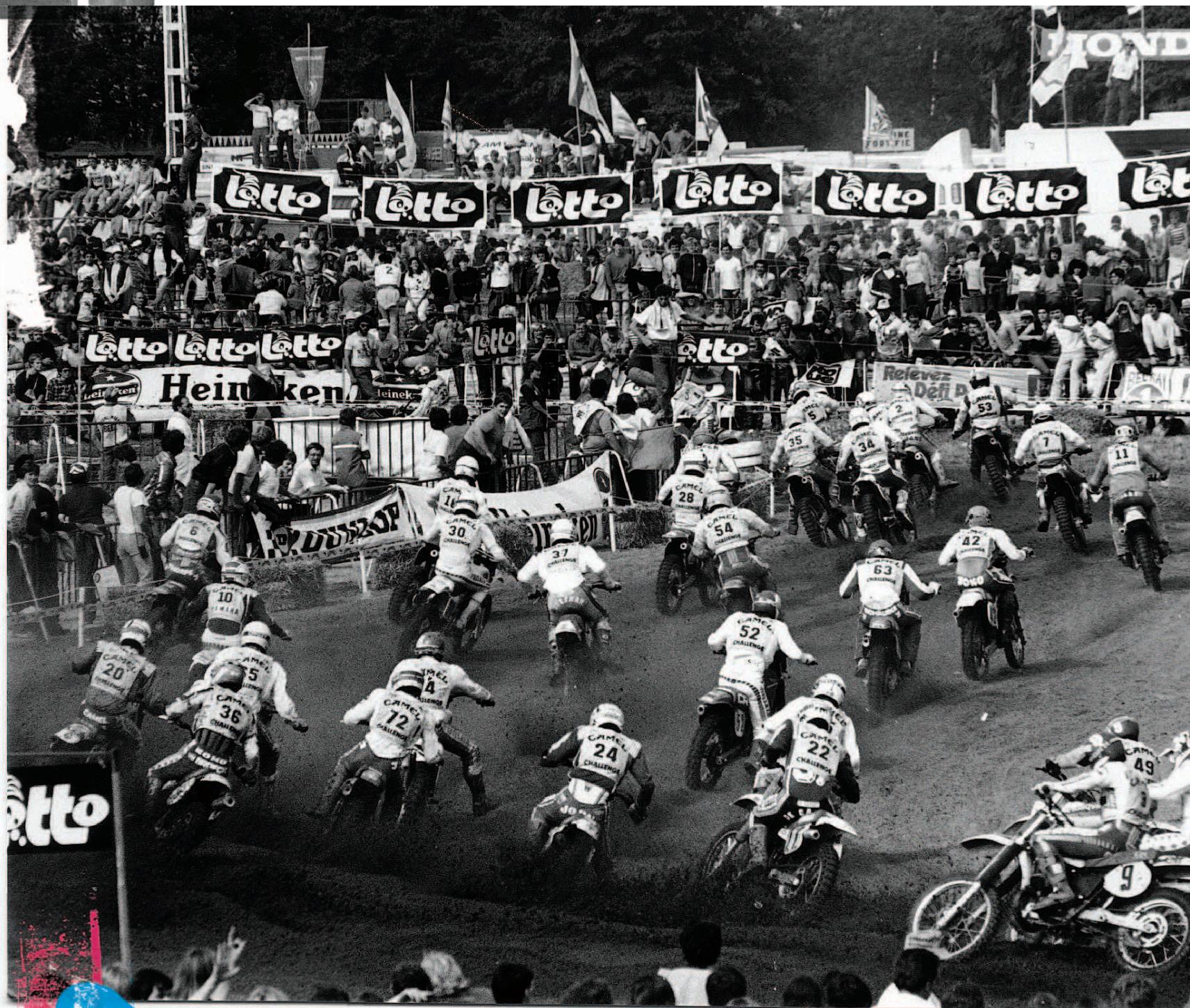


GALLERY #05.7

EVGENY BOBRYshev

Honda World Motocross team rider Evgeny Bobryshev is very much a rider who will build on his young career. The Russian tornado showed good speed at the Grand Prix of Bulgaria and should be a podium finisher before too long

PHOTO COURTESY OF HONDA »



BELGIAN GP

The Belgian Grand Prix has always been an important stop in the FIM World Motocross Championship. Here's a cool old school image from back in the day.



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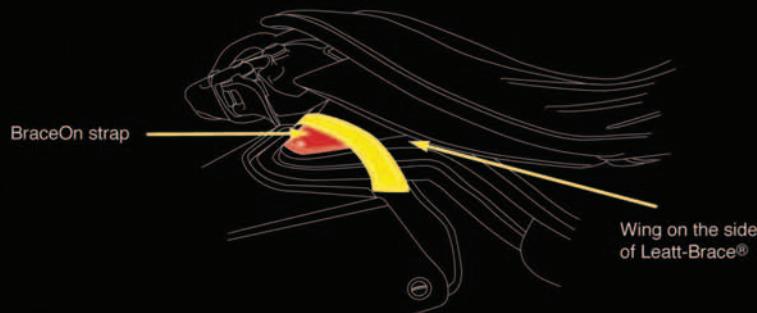
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Words: Dick Law
Photos: Ian Roxburgh
Date: 02-03/04/11
Event: Red Bull Pro Nationals, Round One
Staged by: Events22
Venue: FatCat Motopark, Doncaster



Red



From left to right:
FMX rider Dave Wiggins
Podiums girls
Sandy ruts
Moody sky as Kris Brock whips it



Left: Luke Remmer
Below: Jamie Squibb and Kris Brock entertain the FMX fans
Below again: Jay Lewis Hague enjoying his racing at FatCat



Bull Pro Nationals

With the 2011 Red Bull Pro Nationals season opener kicking off at Doncaster's awesome FatCat Moto Parc on 2 & 3 April, a bumper crowd of just over 7,500 spectators over two days were kept buzzing as they watched the motocross stars of the future battling it out in the hotly contested Red Bull Elite Youth Cup, before being treated to some truly spectacular Pro class action on the Sunday that saw Par Honda's Brad Anderson and DB Racing Honda pilot Elliott Banks-Browne move ahead in the MX1 & MX2 Pro classes.



Kristian Whatley



Stephen Sword



Jake Preston



Martin Barr

Red Bull Pro Nationals

From the very start of qualifying it was obvious that this years Red Bull Pro Nationals MX1 and MX2 championships are going to be very close and ever exciting as in the MX1 class the top six riders, headed up by Shaun Simpson on his LS Honda, all had lap times within two seconds of each other, but as racing started it was last years champ, Brad Anderson on his PAR Homes Honda that was the man to beat.

Anderson was never out of the top three all day long and in race one had a fantastic battle with the on form Proppa.com KTM rider Martin Barr as the lead changed between the pair time and time again, with Anderson passing Barr five turns before the chequered flag to claim the first win of the year.

In race two Anderson passed the fast-starting Buildbase CCM of Stephen Sword on lap two and controlled the race from the front for a maximum overall win, and to prove he is the man they will have to beat in the 2011 season. He said afterwards, "Today has gone well as in the first race I had bad arm pump and was struggling to hold on, but just managed to get past Martin (Barr) on the last lap to snatch the win, in the second my arm pump wasn't a problem and I got out in front, but took things easy in the last couple of laps so I didn't fall off, two class wins, you can't do better than that."

Simpson made hard work of the first race, gating eleventh and by the time he was in third the two leaders were long gone. Race two was different as after a better start he had a battle for second with Sword till the half way stage, then cruised home a comfortable second, and second overall. After racing had finished he said, "Every time I get on my bike I am enjoying myself and that's important right now. I have been racing today as training for the GP's but there was no staying with Brad (Anderson) today, he was the better man, but I am now fitter and have more training races under my belt, ready for the start of the GP's next weekend."

Third overall Barr said, "The day was OK, I had a good go with Brad (Anderson) in race one as we kept swapping the lead, and in race two I made a silly mistake stalling the engine which I did a lot of the hard work I had already done ending up fourth, and third overall which I am happy with."



Others that had a more disappointing day were Buildbase CCM's Tom Church who after leading the first race just ran out of steam as the flu got hold of him and drained him of all his power. Gordon Crockard, after knocking himself out at Canada Heights last weekend turned up and rode the event, but was well off his normal pace and finished twelfth overall, but bagged some valuable points that may come in handy at the end of the year. Kristian Whatley was struggling to find a setup that would last a whole race on his Samsung Emberson Yamaha, but still finished seventh overall.

In the MX2 part of the race, fastest in qualifying, Elliott Banks-Browne on a Pulse Racing DB Honda qualified eighth beating most of the MX1 riders, as well as all of his own class.

In the Red Bull Pro Nationals series all the MX2 riders get a gate pick first and this fact gave Banks-Browne first choice of starting place and the holeshot in race one, as behind him Nathan Parker hit the sand, for the first time, on his Proppa.com KTM, with Jamie Smith riding a Regent Suzuki followed him. After racing had finished, maximum MX2 point scorer said, "It's been a good day really as I had a really big crash in practice and I didn't know if I could even ride today. My back started to hurt halfway through both races and it was a struggle to finish."

Mel Pocock on his Relentless TAS Suzuki followed Banks-Browne home in both races and said, "I had some bad luck in race one as I went down in the second turn and got my legs run over a couple of times but still managed to finish second behind Elliott (Banks-Browne) but in doing that I spent most of my energy, so in race two after I gated well and after a good start I just followed Elliott (Banks-Browne) home." Scott Elderfield dropped his Lanes Kawasaki in race one but still managed third overall.



Shaun Simpson



Brad Anderson



Tom Church



Elliott Banks-Browne

Fuchs Silkolene Two Stroke British Championship



Matt Hoffman



Stuart Edmonds



The boys in the booth



Zac was unlucky



Dan Arnold



Jon Pettitt

Saturday's three race Fuchs Silkolene open two-stroke championship was all about Matthew Moffat on his KTM as in race one he took the lead on lap two from Stuart Edmonds on his TM, and in race two waited till lap eight to take back the lead, again from Edmonds, and in the last race it was lap three, again from Edmonds.

He notched up three wins with Edmonds following him over the finish line on each occasion as the fast pair made taming the sand look easy. After the racing was over for the day, overall winner Moffat said, "The track was great and I didn't expect to get three wins. Stuart (Edmonds) kept me honest all day, but even after a bad start in race three I managed to pass him for the lead and even open up a small gap"

The ever smiling Edmonds, second overall said, "Sand isn't my thing really so happy to get a podium finish and Matt (Moffat) was riding really well and I didn't want to tire myself out too quick. It's the first time I have ridden the two-stroke this year and it goes to show that you need practice on the bike, but we will sort it for next time"

With third overall on his KTM, Carlton Husband said, "I like this sort of rough track but didn't get the starts and it was hard keeping up with these two (Moffat and Edmonds)" Jason Martin won the junior part of the event with three straight wins, from Josh Williams and Jacob Grossman. It was the turn of the 125's to have their three race event on Sunday with a first, and two seconds gave John Pettitt the overall win. Pettitt passed TM's Jim Davis to take the lead in race one, fought his way from fifth at the start to get into second in race two as Ben Howell cleared off for the win in race two, and just missed out on the win after a race long battle with Luke Remmer on his Yamaha in the last race of the day.

Remmer was lucky to take race three win as in race two, while in the lead the clutch went on his bike, with more trouble before the start of race three, he explains, "We replaced the clutch that gave us a DNF in race two, but as I was waiting for the start of three, the bike was miss-firing so I had to change to the brand new bike we had in the van. It hadn't ever been run and by the time the race was nearly over the engine was smoking and getting very hot". Jamie Houghton was unstoppable in the junior part of the event taking three wins from his three starts, as he was chased over the finish line by Thomas Kirk and Christian Lyth



Jim Davies



Will Worden





2 Stroke podiums
Open Expert, Open Junior
125 Expert, 125 Junior

Red Bull Elite Youth Cup

All of the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup races bring out the best in our young up and coming talent but with five races per class spread out over the two days of the weekend it's a hard task to win all of your races, but Nathan Watson on his HM Plant Red Bull KTM did that in the Rookie class, complete dominance.

James Dunn, now on KTM chased Watson over the finish line in three out of the five and finished third in the other two giving him second overall, well in touch with the leader as we go to the next round. Jake Millward was third, but a DNF in Sunday's first race spoilt Bradley Pocock's chance of a higher overall place finish.

Another Watson, this time Ben, on a HM Plant Red Bull KTM won all five of his big wheel races and was chased home in four out of five by Michael Eccles, KTM, with Robert Davidson on a Honda a distant third.

In the big wheel class the finish couldn't have been closer as all weekend Jordan Eccles and Jay Hague both on KTM's traded race wins as the fast pair of small racers dominated the class. Eccles had three wins to Hague's two wins, no one else got a look in as they finished on two hundred and sixteen to Hague's two hundred and thirteen, just the three pointies separating them.

Alexander Brown on a KTM won all but one of his 65cc races, the other going to second overall Jed Etchells, with Oliver Consterdine a distant third. But you have to feel sorry for these young riders as during the last race of the weekend on Sunday the skies opened up and the rain bucketed down soaking them all.

The next round is at Landrake Moto Park in Cornwall on 7th & 8th May. For more information and the full results and photos, log onto www.redbulpronationals.com »



Taylor Hammal



Conor Campbell



Jake Millward



Matthew Callaghan



Dylan Woodcock



James Harrison

Ben Watson



Jed Etchells



Alexander Brown had a good weekend



Jake Parker



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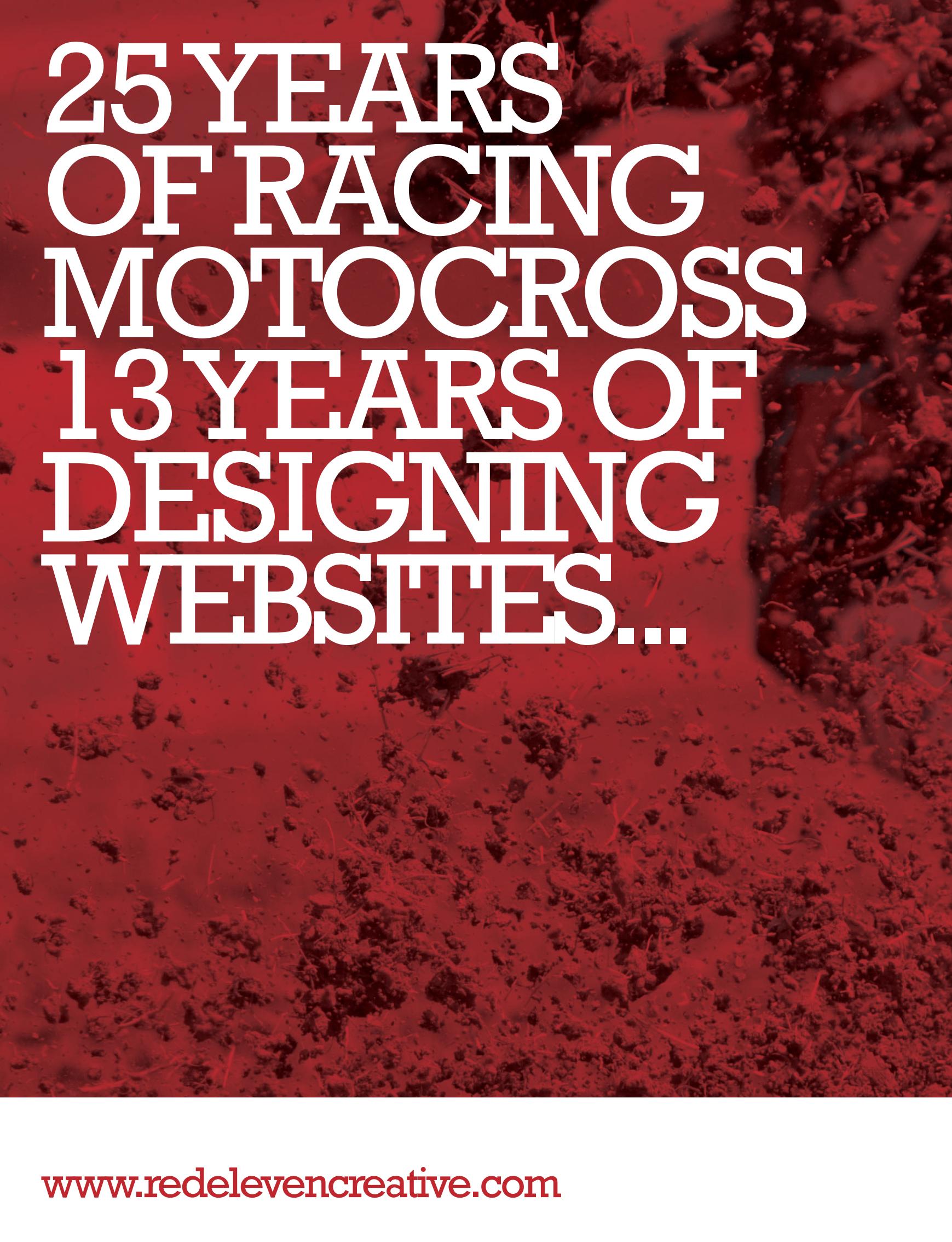
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